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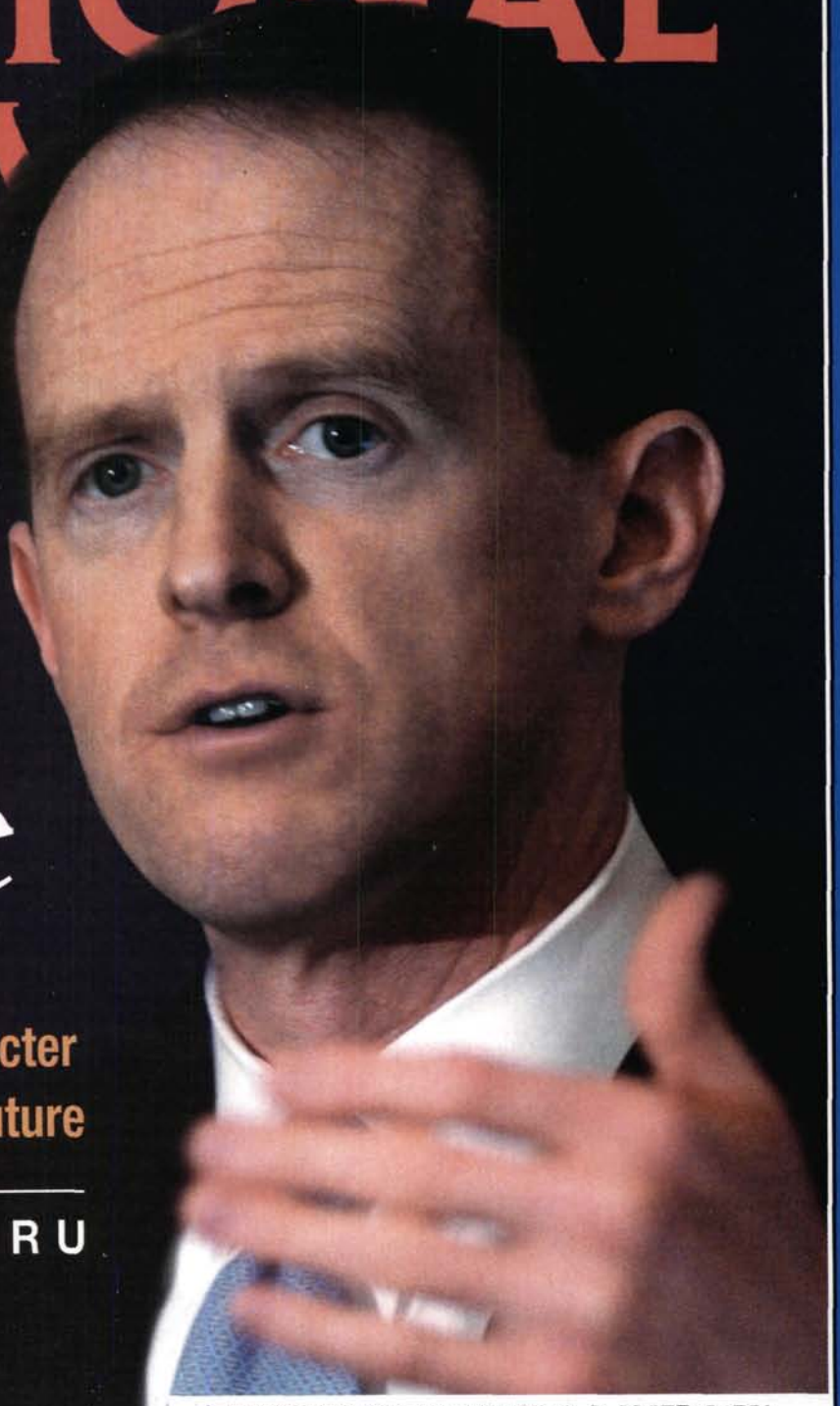
HE TIMES
— Jay Nordlinger

David Frum on His Critics

NATIONAL REVIEW



The Right Choice

Conservative Pat Toomey challenges Sen. Arlen Specter in a battle for the GOP's future

RAMESH PONNURU

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Peter Robinson on WFB's Berlin Wall
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MARCH 22, 2004 VOL. LVI, NO. 5

NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ COVER STORY

Right Fights

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letters to the editor

DUBYA'S TO LOSE

Regarding your "Betting on Bush" editorial (March 8, The Week): Well said.

This election is the president's to lose. The case for war in Iraq is strong, notwithstanding the intelligence failures. And, interestingly, Senator Kerry has become the presumptive nominee with barely a negative attack from his opponents, in contrast to Dean and Gephardt. Kerry's platform is vacuous and his record is weak. If the president and his team can't beat this guy, we might as well pack it up and go home.

Peter Murphy
Troy, N.Y.

KERRY FACT & FICTION

Congratulations to Mackubin Thomas Owens for taking the high road while exposing John Kerry's post-Vietnam activities ("But Was It True?," Feb. 23). Using facts to debunk fiction, Owens presents a powerful argument against Kerry's version of the war.

Should other Kerry opponents ignore this example and choose merely to cast vague aspersions on the senator as a Jane Fonda crony, Kerry's reputation and the Vietnam myth will go unchallenged. The scary truth is that many people believe the anti-American propaganda promulgated by Kerry and Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Our citizens have been so completely brainwashed about the nature of that conflict, and on the mental state of its veterans, that most will give Kerry kudos for his "moral courage"—never considering that his rhetoric was self-serving, inaccurate, helpful to the enemy, harmful to our cause, and slanderous toward his "brothers in arms." Facts, facts, and more facts are needed to counter this national blind spot.

I was in the military many years after Vietnam, but there were still veterans of that war in units alongside me. They were, without exception, well adjusted, honorable, and patriotic men, deservedly proud of their service. Perhaps by confronting Kerry's Vietnam lies, we can finally, as a nation, fully acknowledge the heroism of these veterans, and remove the undeserved badge of shame that has needlessly and wrongfully been affixed to them. Thanks to Mr. Owens for his work.

Jay McConville
Alexandria, Va.

FOR AND AGIN'

I look to my NR subscription for political analysis to balance that found in *The New Yorker*. Yet time and again I find NR's political commentary to be infected with moralizing. Thus an article about the National Endowment for the Arts ("Up from Mapplethorpe," March 8) devolves into a predictable attack on works perceived as blasphemous, or that potentially glamorize crime. A review of the new Mel Gibson movie reads like a religious tract. It occurs to me that if the Republican party continues to identify itself with vice vigilantism, it stands to lose more than just the culture wars in this country.

Kenneth Morrill
New York, N.Y.

It is such a breath of air to read an insightful and comprehensive article such as Ramesh Ponnuru's "A Movie and Its Meaning" (March 8), written from a Christian perspective, in a national, secular magazine. One would never find this article in a magazine such as *Time* or *Newsweek*.

Thank you for affirming my decision to subscribe to NATIONAL REVIEW. With this article, you have gained a long-term subscriber.

Jim Gosney
New York, N.Y.

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Solving America's Retirement Problem

America has a retirement crisis. If the U.S. manufacturing sector is allowed to shrink further, this crisis will devolve into a national economic catastrophe.

The U.S. retirement crisis exists largely because of America's twin deficits - a federal budget that now has a $500 billion annual shortfall and a trade deficit that is even larger.

If these twin deficits were brought into balance, America's retirement crisis would largely disappear. Americans would have more and better-paying manufacturing jobs. Companies could meet their pension obligations, and federal revenues could pay the costs of Social Security and Medicare, without either cutting benefits or raising taxes.

The budget deficit exists because Congress and the Administration have abandoned the "pay-as-you-go" rules it followed between 1990 and 2002. Under those rules, any tax cut or new spending had to be matched by cuts of an equal value, thus ensuring the overall budget deficit would not be increased.

The trade deficit exists because the United States is following a trade policy that discriminates against companies that operate inside the United States, while encouraging "offshoring".

Companies that produce inside the United States pay workers a living wage, obey laws that protect the environment, assure worker safety, provide social benefits, and pay taxes to the federal, state and local governments.

Those companies that shift their operations offshore can hire penny-wage labor, evade most social obligations, lower their production costs, and then bring their goods back into the U.S. market, where they undercut and ultimately devastate domestic producers. With such an economic double standard, tens of thousands of U.S. manufacturers are left with a stark choice: go out of business or move their production offshore.

To survive, thousands of U.S. companies are leaving America. One measure of this shift is that one half the exports from China come from foreign-owned factories, mostly American-owned. Another measure of how this phenomenon is affecting the U.S. economy is that the U.S. trade deficit has risen from less than one percent of America's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1993 to almost five percent in 2004.

A solution to America's retirement crisis is for Congress and the Administration to balance the federal budget and eliminate the U.S. trade deficit - thus creating a more vibrant manufacturing sector.

We think eliminating these twin deficits is the principal economic and political challenge that America now faces. What do you think?

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for the record

"English, math, history, science . . . when are we going to learn something practical?"

■ In Fox News poll, President **Bush** and Sen. **John Kerry** (D., Mass.) tie at 45 percent apiece in prospective matchup. . . . Bush: "The other party's nomination battle is still playing out. The candidates are an interesting group with diverse opinions: for tax cuts and against them; for NAFTA and against NAFTA; for the Patriot Act and against the Patriot Act; in favor of liberating Iraq and opposed to it. And that's just one senator from Massachusetts." . . . Bush: "If we're to prevent the meaning of marriage from being changed forever, our nation must enact a constitutional amendment to protect marriage in America. . . . Today, I call upon the Congress to promptly pass and to send to the states for ratification an amendment to our Constitution defining and protecting marriage as a union of a man and woman as husband and wife." . . . In ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, 46 percent support constitutional amendment banning gay marriage and 45 percent oppose. . . . National debt rises above $7 trillion. . . . In Harris Poll, 51 percent say government reports on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq were "deliberately exaggerated." . . . CIA director **George Tenet**: "Even catastrophic attacks on the scale of 9/11 remain within al-Qaeda's reach." . . . "I give the effort overall real credit," says Senate minority leader **Tom Daschle** on Iraq. "It is a good thing **Saddam Hussein** is no longer in power. It is a good thing we are democratizing the country."

■ Kerry letter to Bush: "Over the last week, you and your campaign have initiated a widespread attack on my service in Vietnam, my decision to speak out to end that war, and my commitment to the defense of this nation. . . . I will not sit back and allow my patriotism to be challenged." . . . More Kerry: "I think George Bush is on the run and I think he's on the run because he doesn't have a record to run on." . . . Even more Kerry: "In all the years I've been in public life, I've never seen the system tilted against the average person as much as it is today." . . . Bush campaign media adviser **Mark McKinnon** suggests possible anti-Kerry theme, in *Washington Post*: "He's been wrong for 32 years, he's wrong now." . . . AFSCME president **Gerald McEntee** on **Howard Dean**, whom his union previously endorsed for president, in *New York Times*: "I think he's nuts." . . . **Ralph Nader** announces independent bid for presidency. . . . Gov. **Bill Richardson** (D., N.M.) on Nader, on Fox News: "It's terrible if he goes ahead, because it's about him, it's about his ego, it's about his vanity." . . . **Teresa Heinz Kerry** discusses her husband, on CNN: "I think he's a man who likes complexity, understands it, and doesn't shy away from looking sometimes as though he is saying one thing and doing another when in fact, anybody who understands this knows exactly what he means. I think only people who like simple notions or simple solutions—well, simplification, let's say—would expect that to be so. I find complexity interesting and so does he. And we do live in complex times."

■ **Ben Chandler** wins House seat in Kentucky, marking first Democratic victory in a special election since 1991. . . . Sen. **Arlen Specter** (R., Pa.) files FEC complaint against Club for Growth for coordinating ads with primary challenger Rep. **Pat Toomey**. . . . In Keystone Poll, only 39 percent rate Specter's job performance as good or excellent and 42 percent rank it fair or poor. . . . Gov. **Mitt Romney** (R., Mass.) to Gov. **Tom Vilsack** (D., Ia.) after Vilsack attacked Bush at bipartisan press conference, in *Washington Times*: "That's awful, what you just did." . . . Rep. **Jim DeMint** (R., S.C.) on Medicaid bill, in *National Journal*: "We gave up too much to get too little." . . . Conservative activists in California say they may launch recall drive against attorney general **Bill Lockyer** for not halting gay marriages in San Francisco.

■ Rates of teen pregnancy and abortion continue to decline, according to Alan Guttmacher Institute. Highest rate of teen pregnancy found in Nevada, lowest in North Dakota; highest rate of teen abortion in New Jersey, lowest in Kentucky and Utah. . . . In meeting with assistant secretary of state **Roger Noriega**, Rep. **Corrine Brown** (D., Fla.) calls Bush administration policy toward Haiti "racist" and its representatives "a bunch of white men," according to AP. Noriega replies: "As a Mexican American, I deeply resent being called a racist and branded a white man." Brown: "You all look alike to me." . . . In Gallup poll, 51 percent oppose Bush immigration plan. . . . U.S. district judge **T. S. Ellis III** says Virginia colleges and universities may deny admission to illegal aliens.

■ **Digby Jones** of Britain's Confederation of Business Industry: "I don't like to hear talk of 'Benedict Arnold CEOs,' which is completely unfair. Nor do I like to hear people replacing the phrase 'free trade' with 'fair trade' and then going on to propose measures that are really about creating unfairness. If it wants a job-rich recovery, America too must resist the siren voices of protectionism." . . . After secretary of state **Colin Powell** contacts Haitian opposition leaders, one of them says his name means "does not see" in Haitian Creole.

■ **Jay Leno**: "The Department of Homeland Security is now working with the United States Post Office on a plan to deliver antibiotics to the American people in the event of a terrorist attack, which will work out great—unless of course the attack is on a Sunday, a holiday, or a three-day weekend." **NR**

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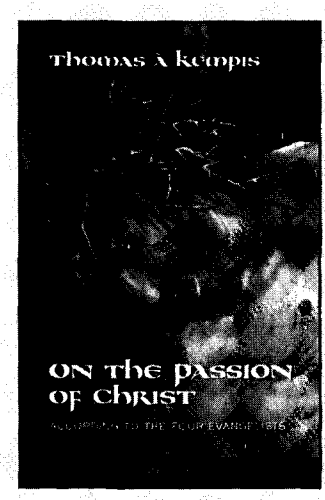

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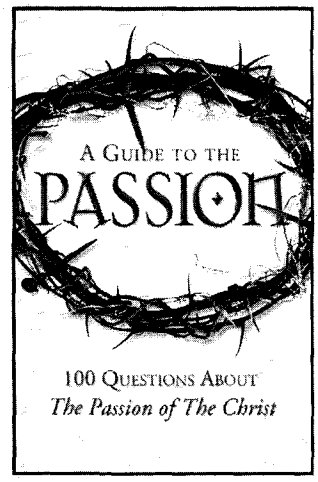

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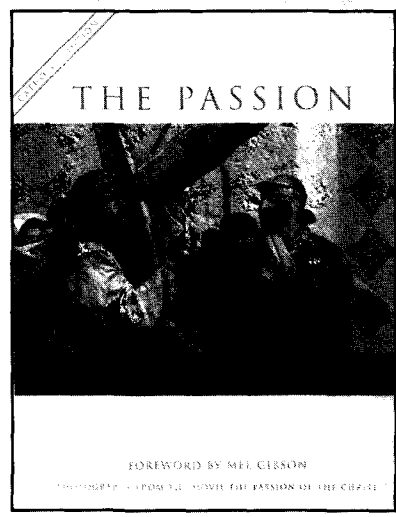

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—Mel Gibson

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THE WEEK

■ Iraqis have proposed a constitution; no word yet on how the Massachusetts supreme court will rule.

■ President Bush, speaking at the Republican Governors Association, showed some of the feistiness that his well-wishers have been yearning to see. About the Iraq war, he said, "Others would have chosen differently. They now agree that the world is better off with Saddam Hussein out of power; they just didn't support removing Saddam from power. Maybe they were hoping he'd lose the next Iraqi election." He promised to continue to be a war president in his second term—and to create an "ownership society" in which all Americans have some wealth in their private Social Security accounts. He zinged the Democrats relentlessly. The speech was taken as a campaign kick-off. It's high time. The president has a real fight on his hands, and it is good to know that he knows it.

■ Last of the Democratic bathwater, John Edwards runs down the drain. Edwards was an attractive figure, if you like after-shaved, multimillionaire lawyers. His lack of political experience—one term in the Senate is the whole of it—made him seem fresh, though it is hardly a qualification for taking care of the football. Edwards's stated views on free trade were primitive and shrill, and his attacks on it and on the Bush administration invoked a Dustbowl America that, since he never experienced it, he must have seen in late-night showings of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Unlike Wesley Clark, he was sane, and unlike John Kerry, he lacked the ability to do significant harm. But he was not a serious man. His Senate term ends this year, and he will not seek re-election. No loss.

■ Finally, the mainstream press has taken some substantive interest in Mackubin Thomas Owens's NR cover story about John Kerry's 1971 congressional testimony. Kerry alleged widespread American war crimes such as rape and beheading, committed with the awareness of the chain of command. This was an outrageous smear. In a recent front-page piece, the *New York Times* actually admits as much. The paper quotes historian Douglas Brinkley, author of a sympathetic book on Kerry's wartime experiences, saying the testimony was "the low moment" of Kerry's anti-war activity in Washington, D.C., that week. The story also quoted Gary Solis, an expert on war crimes: "Sure there were people raped, ears cut off and so on. Each one of the things that he mentioned happened, in some cases I know, and in others I'm confident. But when you put them all together in one sentence and say this was well-known at every level of command, it impugns, it seems to me, everyone who fought over there and it gives the impression that everyone who fought over there was a war criminal and that's just not true." All that is necessary to put this matter to rest now is for Kerry to acknowledge his slander of American servicemen, and to apologize for it. Expect more dishonest evasions instead.

Teresa the Entertainer

ROMAN GENN

■ *National Journal* ranks senators on a liberal-to-conservative scale, and guess who the very most liberal senator of 2003 was? That's right, one John Kerry of Massachusetts, who had an almost-perfect liberal score of 97, beating out his partner Ted Kennedy, Barbara Boxer, Russell Feingold, Barbara Mikulski, Hillary Clinton, and other worthies. The survey proves a point that we have been keen to stress: Kerry is a very left-wing guy, and always has been. For about 20 years, he has been one of the leftmost politicians on the national scene. This is true in his beliefs, in his Senate votes, in his attitudes, and in his rhetoric. But because Howard Dean came on so strong with that nutty-Left campaign of his, Kerry seemed sort of moderate, as an alternative—he screamed less. So thanks to *National Journal* for reminding one and all that John Kerry is no Sober Centrist. Very far from it.

■ When it appeared that Kerry would win the nomination, we were sure of one thing: Teresa Heinz Kerry would be good for some entertainment (in that Martha Mitchell way). And so she has been. A statement she made while campaigning in California is positively dizzying. Here she is: "What has been most damaging, I think—to all of us—about many of the actions of this administration has been the cynicism with which

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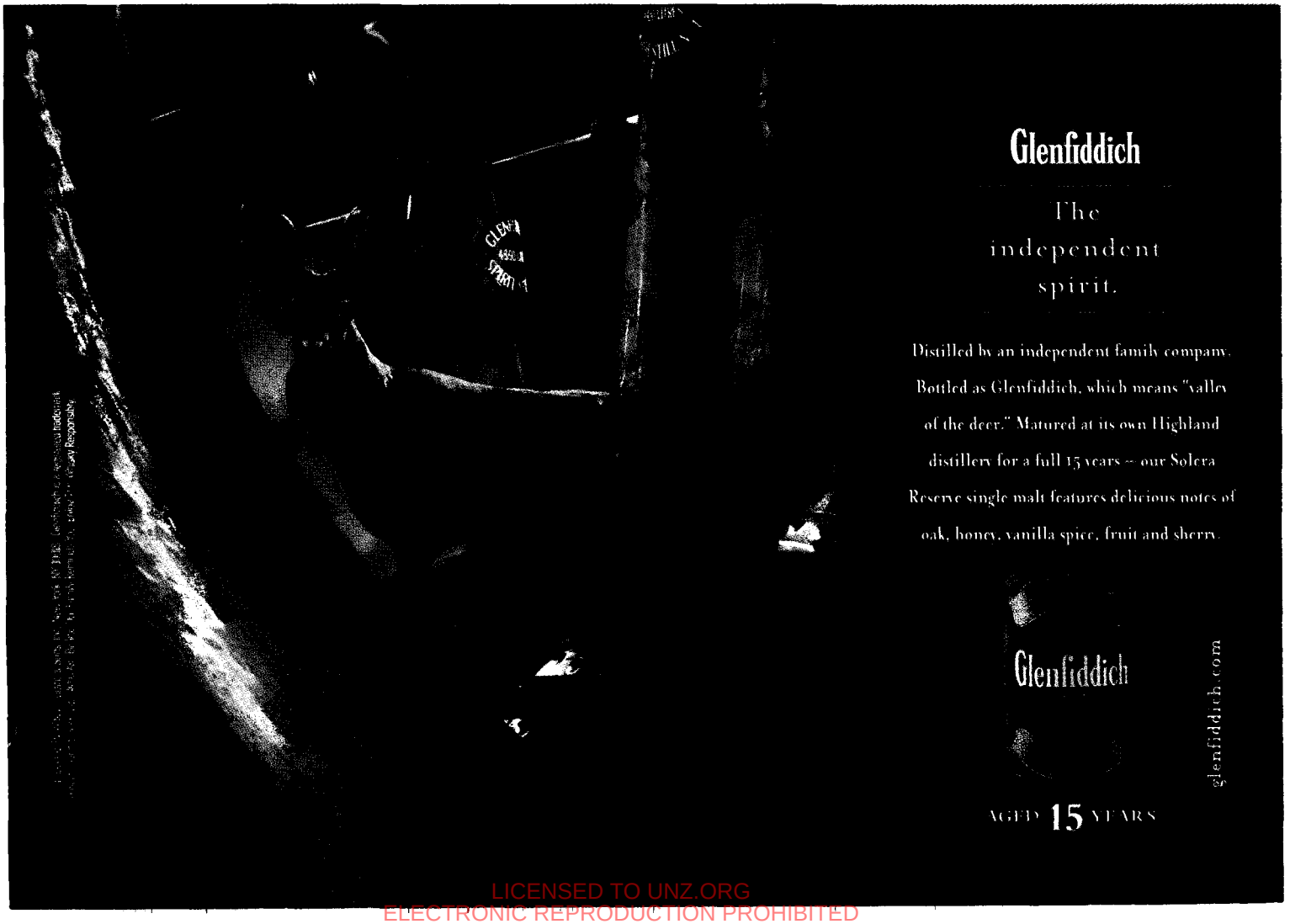
they have perpetrated their positions and with which they have used us to trap us and to, in a sense, terrorize us, because they paralyze us. And you know what? That is un-American, in my book." Oh, Teresa! First, she poaches on Jesse Jackson's territory, with that "terrorize us" and "paralyze us." But the rhyming aside: *terrorize*? *un-American*? The entire statement is cracked, yes. But, in particular, can you imagine if the wife of the Republican candidate had hurled at a Democratic administration the word "un-American"? Of course you can. It would be Armageddon. But La Teresa apparently has an exemption, and perhaps we should thank her for the entertainment.

■ In testimony before Congress, Alan Greenspan said the deficit should be eliminated through spending cuts, not tax increases. He mentioned, in particular, the desirability of reductions in future Social Security and Medicare benefits. Greenspan also said that the government should stop cosseting Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and that the current arrangements risked putting taxpayers on the hook for their liabilities. Congress is not likely to act on any of these suggestions, but good for Greenspan for making them.

■ Scott Peterson is being tried for double murder. That's because California law recognizes that the murder of a pregnant woman has two victims. Sharon Rocha, the mother of Laci Peterson and the grandmother of Conner Peterson, has asked Congress to enact a national law that recognizes that federal crimes, too, can have two victims. The House has just passed the bill, but pro-abortion senators, including John Kerry and both California senators, are holding it up. They are worried that the law would be a threat to *Roe* v. *Wade*, a claim that even pro-*Roe* legal scholars have disputed. Mrs. Rocha cannot understand why the abortion lobby is standing in the way of justice here. As she wrote in a letter to Kerry, "There were two bodies that washed up in San Francisco Bay, and the law should recognize that reality."

■ There are strange doings in Palm Beach County, and we don't mean hanging chads. Rush Limbaugh is under shameful attack from Democratic prosecutor Barry Krischer, who is up for reelection this year. As the world knows, Rush became hooked on pain medication, which he was taking for chronic back and neck pain. He has since gone through intense rehabilitation and continues to receive therapy. In Palm Beach County and elsewhere, this usually ends the matter—but Rush apparently provides too juicy a target for a hungry partisan prosecutor. Krischer's office first leaked stories to the media claiming that Rush was under investigation for money laundering. Next, it asserted that he was part of a drug ring. Now Krischer is supposedly looking into "doctor shopping." In this regard, Rush's medical records were seized from four different doctors' offices, without the government's following the usual subpoena process. Krischer then had Rush's prescription records posted on a public website, and they in turn were flashed across television screens for days. (A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THE WEEK...

Florida appellate court is now considering the legality of the government's search, after ordering the records returned to the lower court and placed under seal.) In another move that raises serious ethical questions, Krischer released confidential communications between Rush's lawyer and the prosecutor's office in response to a public documents request. Krischer claimed that both the Florida bar and the state attorney general's top ethics official advised him to do it, but both deny it. This earned Krischer an ethics complaint filed by the Landmark Legal Foundation. Democrats have long wanted to get Rush Limbaugh, but he has a track record of making them look silly. And so it continues.

■ Rick Weiss of the *Washington Post* is one of the most respected and influential science reporters around, and deservedly so. His articles have leaned toward the pro-cloning side of the debate. (An article from early 2002 became notorious for likening opponents to the Taliban.) So it is noteworthy that a recent article of his exploded a popular fiction used to promote cloning. The p.r. campaign for cloning has emphasized the possibility that scientists would be able to "make a cloned embryo from a patient's healthy cells and then retrieve from the embryo stem cells that could be used to repair the patient's failing organ." As Weiss reports, however, such "therapeutic cloning" is extremely unlikely to pan out any time soon. Scientists are more keen to clone human embryos for purposes of basic research. So, for example, researchers would take a degenerating nerve cell from a patient with Lou Gehrig's disease, clone a human embryo with the disease, and then see how the disease affects nervous tissue developed from the clone. Therapeutic applications could follow, but several steps down the line. Weiss's reporting does not change the moral calculus: We think that creating embryonic human beings and then deliberately destroying them should be banned, however noble or appealing the purpose behind the acts. But we wonder how the opposite side of this debate will fare politically when it is admitted that cloning is not about to make Christopher Reeve walk.

ONE-NOTE EDWARDS

He overflows with boyish charm,
And in a retail state,
He gives that horsy guy a run;
But, sorry to relate,
His only note—and that one's in
The boring key of C—
Was all about how he was po':
Hey, some biography.

—W. H. VON DREELE

■ New Paltz, N.Y., is a Rip Van Winkle-ish town on the edge of the Catskills, founded by French Calvinists three centuries ago. It recently turned in its sleep when Mayor Jason West performed a number of illegal same-sex weddings. Mayor West, a 26-year-old former house painter, won office last year running on the Green Party ticket. Local Republicans and Democrats were in an ineffectual deadlock: A pothole with the footprint of a small car had sat athwart Main Street for months, unattended. The town also made the grave mistake, some years ago, of installing voting machines on the campus of SUNY-New Paltz, the local teachers' college become pompous. So the fly-by-night students could vote simply by rolling out of their dorms. Mayor West also wants town vehicles to use biodiesel fuel. Where was that funny old jug? Looks like they could all use a rest.

■ Jean-Bertrand Aristide has left Haiti, and the Marines have come in. The country may enjoy a bit of a lull, if not the dawn of a new era. A charismatic radical Catholic priest who preached against the Duvalier family dictatorship, Aristide seemed like a good idea when he was first elected president in 1990. After a coup, the United States sent Marines to restore him in 1994. Yet as the years passed, Aristide quashed opponents and ruled by thugs and gangs, without ameliorating Haiti's poverty. His American supporters, such as Rep. Charlie Rangel (D., N.Y.), gave him a pass on racial grounds. The job of the Marines now is to keep power from the hands of anti-Aristide thugs and gangs. An interim regime stabilized by the U.N. and the OAS is the best Haiti can hope for in the short run. The longer such a regime stays in power, keeping chaos at bay, the better Haiti's long-term prospects will be.

■ An Iraqi constitution has bumped into existence. The U.S.-appointed Governing Council that midwifed it had no obvious James Madisons in its midst. But, in fairness to the Iraqis, they, unlike our Constitution-writers, had to conduct their efforts in public (all the deliberations and the minutes of the Philadelphia Convention were secret; when one delegate left a document in public, George Washington, the presiding officer, blew his stack). The test of Iraq's constitution, like ours, will be in the near future, as it begins to operate. America's Bill of Rights, the first Judiciary Act, the financial system, and the precedents of the executive branch all took ten years to put in place. Iraqis have only old traditions of self-rule, and three wars and a brutal dictator in their more recent past. If their constitution provides some order, some decency, and some freedom, they will have done well indeed.

■ During a recent Oval Office visit, President Bush and German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder had a fine old time, yukking it up and letting bygones be bygones. Bush said that the U.S. and Germany had had "differences in the past," but "there's nothing wrong with friends' having differences." What's going on? The president is peeling Schroeder off from Chirac, Germany from France, driving a wedge between the two biggest problem children for America in Europe. It is shrewd diplomacy. And everyone—all the smart set—says that Bush doesn't do nuance. Sure, he does nuance, as do Condi, Rummy, Wolfie, et al.—but only when it has a chance of succeeding, and not at the cost of vital principle. We applaud.

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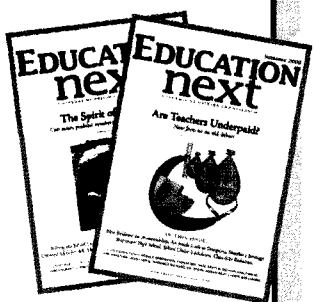

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In 1987, touring colleges with my kids, I was shaken by two realities: first, the absence of any sort of productivity gains in higher education, amid an economy whose principal engine of growth was (and remains) improved output per unit of worker input; second, the tendency of U.S. colleges to compete for desirable students by adding upscale amenities, what a Mount Holyoke dean once termed the "Chivas Regal strategy." (During our campus visits, my daughter remarked that it was like comparing resort hotels.)

My own children are—fortunately—finished with all that, but the idea of creating some stripped-down, no-frills college models seems even more apt today. What would such places look like? Key features would include a lean administration, few nonteaching employees, and most campus jobs performed by students or outsourced; amenities (entertainment, food courts, fancy gyms, etc.) left to entrepreneurs—and paid for by those who use them; a year-round calendar with facilities in constant use, steady work for employees, and the opportunity for energetic students to finish faster; faculty that are paid well but worked hard; a trimmed-down curriculum with a solid core and strong majors in a dozen fields but no pretense of teaching everything; and rigorous exit standards with diplomas equivalent to an intellectual "warranty." This model could serve as a plausible formula for containing the cost and price of higher education and eking some productivity gains from this enterprise.

What's happened since 1988, however, seems noteworthy on four fronts.

First, yesterday's troubling trends have intensified. Students take ever longer to complete their degrees. The academic week and year grow ever shorter as amenities grow yet more lavish (indoor climbing walls?).

Second, whereas the price pain then was felt primarily by those at private campuses, today the public university price tag is soaring, too.

Third, higher education has developed a fast-growing sector that follows the no-frills formula: the for-profit sector, characterized by the University of Phoenix and kindred vendors of reasonably efficient and relatively inexpensive postsecondary schooling.

Fourth, technology enables students to avail themselves of higher education without ever showing up on campus. The for-profit sector makes expert use of this delivery system, but traditional universities are working at it, too. Because distance learning makes it possible not only to slash campus expenses but also to extend a professor's "reach" to far more students, it serves willy-nilly to boost academic productivity.

As Congress and state legislatures seek to contain the cost of college, they may want to encourage more no-frills institutions and nudge more students toward the efficient providers. The starting point is to cease treating traditional college economics as immutable and instead to recognize that society has an obligation to reward efficiency and productivity here just like it does everyplace else.

—Chester E. Finn Jr.

Chester E. Finn Jr. is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution; chairman of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education; and president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

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THE WEEK...

■ The proprietors of Saudi Arabia are trying to lighten up the country's image. So far their efforts in this direction have displayed all the ease and grace of your maiden aunt attempting to boogie. Most recently they have decided to promote the kingdom as a tourist destination, with the establishment of a Supreme Commission on Tourism and the creation, for the first time in Saudi history, of tourist visas. Gushed the commission's website in mid February: "The people of Saudi Arabia are warm, hospitable and friendly. They extend a warm invitation to you to come and experience this unique and rare destination." Unfortunately, readers who then advanced to the "visa requirements" page learned that visas would not be issued to Israeli passport holders or those with a passport containing an Israeli stamp; "those who don't abide by the Saudi traditions concerning appearance and behaviours"; "those under the influence of alcohol"; or "Jewish people." After a couple of news stories appeared about this in the Western media, the site underwent a swift transformation. The offending passage has been replaced with this: "When erroneous information was noticed on SCT's website, it was removed. SCT regrets any inconvenience this may have caused." So . . . what is the policy now? Has the Jewish-exclusion clause merely gone from overt to covert? Should Jews even bother to apply for Saudi tourist visas? Or are potential tourists still being offered sun, sea, surf, sand, and anti-Semitism?

■ The American bishops of the Catholic Church selected a National Review Board of laymen to investigate the "causes and context" of the sexual-abuse scandal. The board has now issued a report that candidly confronts the scandal and sharply rebukes the Church's hierarchy. It revealed that 4,392 priests were accused of sexually abusing minors between 1950 and 2002. That is 4 percent of the priests in active ministry during that time. Eighty-one percent of the victims were male. Three-quarters were adolescents. The board concluded that "the crisis was characterized by homosexual behavior." It also found that the incidence of sexual abuse surged during the '60s and '70s, when "some seminaries yielded to a culture of sexual permissiveness and moral relativism." The failure to prevent the scandal is thus laid at the doorstep of bishops who did not properly govern the seminaries. The board also apportioned responsibility for the failure to respond to the abuse once it happened.

JAMES SORENSEN/NBC/NEWSMAKERS/GETTY

Liberal Education

NBC's *West Wing* might be moving a smidgen to the right—to the extent that means anything for a live-action political cartoon. The February 25 episode was a morality tale about school choice, one that proved two things: Conservatives have the better argument, and Hollywood liberals still suffer from a plantation mentality about blacks.

Here's what happened. The mayor of Washington, D.C., is called to the White House to be notified that the president will veto the education bill because it includes money for a voucher pilot program in the District and Democrats must always and everywhere oppose vouchers. When the mayor arrives, he tells the president's aides that—shudder—he wants the money. The staff stumbles backward to their fainting-couches. When they recover from the shock, they decide their only choice is to put the mayor in a room with genius-saint-Nobelist-polymath-Yoda president Jed Bartlet. In the meeting Bartlet rolls out the usual clichés and Jedi mind-tricks about how public money for private schools "destroys" public education. The mayor won't budge: He says that this is a program for just a few hundred kids out of 68,000; if money were the issue, then D.C.—which spends $13,525 per pupil, 77 percent above the national average—would have the best schools in the world. Besides, he asks, why does the White House, with all of its private-school alumni, get to lecture him on the sanctity of public schools?

Aha! The mayor has fallen into the president's trap! President Bartlet calls in Charlie, his aide-de-camp, and the show's permanent "numinous negro" (to borrow a phrase from *NR*'s Rick Brookhiser). Bartlet shows off the Bright Young Man as Exhibit A: He's a "product of D.C. public schools," he beams. The mayor retorts, "Charlie, where did you *want* to go to school?" "Gonzaga," the lad says, numinously. "Why?" the mayor asks. "Because it had no metal detectors, everyone there went to college, it was a better school."

As Charlie relates, he didn't go to Gonzaga because he couldn't afford it, though he would have taken a voucher in a second. The president goes ashen. He decides to sign the bill, which will give scholarships to a few hundred more Charlies. He asks the mayor to help him "put out the fires" this will start in the Democratic party.

Of course, all of this raises the question: What kind of condescending idiot is President Bartlet? Had he (or the writers) never before heard that black families want to send their kids to better schools? Would he have gone on for years standing in the private-schoolhouse door to block poor black kids, all for the lack of a sharp-minded black valet to lift the veil from his eyes? Of course, the producers no doubt see this as a profile-in-courage moment for their idealized president. But what it really reveals is the ideological cowardice of the Democratic party's real, official position.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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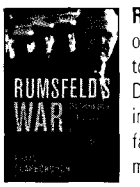

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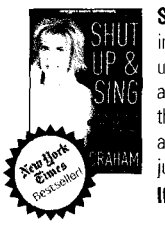

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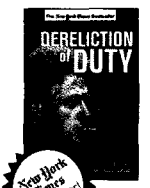

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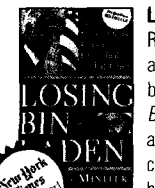

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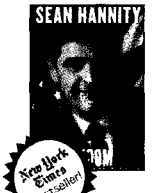

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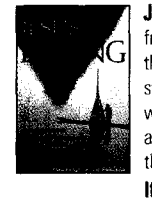

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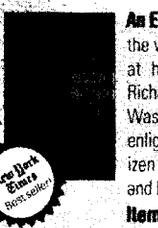

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THE WEEK...

While many dioceses adopted appropriate policies in the '90s to deal with abuse allegations, too many bishops responded with "moral laxity, excessive leniency, insensitivity, secrecy, and neglect." Several hundred priests have been removed from ministry, but few bishops have left the episcopacy. The board's comprehensive analysis and recommendations, available at CatholicReviewBoard.com, provide little support for critics who build a case for female or married priests on the ruins of the scandal. "The problem facing the Church was not caused by Church doctrine, and the solution does not lie in questioning doctrine," the board concludes, faithfully.

■ Is it right that old goats in positions of power—professors, bosses, clergymen—nuzzle their charges? No, of course not. Do they deserve exposure, even when their behavior is only gross, not criminal? Why not? Why should shame and embarrassment run only one way? But can we take seriously Naomi Wolf's charge, in a *New York* magazine cover story, that Prof. Harold Bloom groped her when she was his student in 1983? Where has she been in the 21 years since? Empires have fallen, wars have come and gone. She was once a hot young author; she had resources. Could her openness now have to do with her waning, and Harold Bloom's waxing, fame? If we were Naomi Wolf's editor, we would say, get this garbage off my desk, find some fresher garbage.

■ Who's got a right to sing the blues? *Escaping the Delta*, a recent book by Elijah Wald on Robert Johnson and the early history of blues, has caused a mild flap by arguing that Johnson is misunderstood. Johnson was the classic musician *maudit*—dead in his late twenties, supposedly the beneficiary of a deal with the devil. We think of his sound as marked by race, poverty, and addiction—a trifecta. But Wald argues that early blues men and women were in fact pop performers who reached, or in Johnson's case, aspired to reach, a large commercial public. More heretically still, Wald notes that blues musicians were influenced by white pop tunes. Record companies and folklorists muddied this fact. American song is a sea, fed by many streams, and musicians take whatever they like, from wherever they can.

■ *Forbes* magazine released its annual list of billionaires, and one of the newcomers is J. K. Rowling. She is the woman—once on welfare, a single mother—who wrote the Harry Potter books, which have sold 250 million copies worldwide, and spawned movies and merchandise. She created enchanting stories that people (of all ages) like to read—and made a fortune out of it. Kind of nice.

■ Daniel Boorstin was the grandson of Russian Jewish immigrants, and he studied at Harvard, Oxford, and Yale. With that lift-off, he taught at Harvard, Radcliffe, and Swarthmore, before spending the bulk of his academic career as a history professor at Chicago. He won about every prize going as a historian. He also served as director of the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History and Technology and then as librarian of Congress. His interests were omnivorous and his definition of history was operationally *everything*. He wrote 26 books, characterized by erudition, originality, and a supple style. (His best-known work was his trilogy *The Americans*.) Like so many men of his caliber, he proved vexing to the conformists. After a youthful folly in joining a Communist cell at Harvard, he performed his public duty in "naming names." The vilification to which he was subject was praise. During the '60s, those years of the locust, he called disruptive student radicals "barbarians" and "incoherent kooks," no doubt mincing his words. He opposed affirmative action and described Black Studies as "racist trash." He knew that books were sources of enduring values. A wise and great man, Daniel Boorstin has died in Washington, D.C., at age 89. R.I.P.

MARRIAGE

A Battle, Joined

PRESIDENT BUSH neatly summarized the case for a constitutional amendment regarding marriage. Congress and 38 states have in recent years passed legislation reaffirming that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, showing this definition to be "an overwhelming consensus in our country." But "some activist judges and local officials"—acting in a spirit of lawlessness—"have made an aggressive attempt to redefine marriage." He continued, "On a matter of such importance, the voice of the people must be heard." The federal Defense of Marriage Act was an attempt to ensure that their voice would be heard. But activist courts could strike it down; and federal and state courts could impose same-sex marriage on any state, or all states, even if that law stayed on the books. Thus, concluded the president, an amendment to the Constitution is necessary.

With near uniformity, the media portrayed the president as a cynical exploiter of "wedge issues." The phrase "wedge issues" deserves its own long entry in the encyclopedia of liberalism; its meaning appears to be that there is something untoward, disgraceful even, when a Republican politician has the temerity to point out that the Democrats' position is out of step with public opinion. In any case, the notion that the president woke up one day, saw that his poll numbers had slid, and decided to whip up popular hostility to homosexuals as a political ploy is ludicrous on its face. It was not opponents of same-sex marriage who put the issue on the national agenda. It was liberal judges, lately aided by liberal mayors. Moreover, the president has on several occasions stressed the importance of conducting "this difficult debate in a manner worthy of our country, without bitterness or anger" toward homosexuals or others. As for those Democrats who are saying that Bush wants to "write discrimination into the Constitution," they should re-examine their position. If the amendment is "discrimination," then all opposition to same-sex marriage is discrimination, too. Yet almost all of these Democrats, such as John Kerry, profess to be opposed to same-sex marriage themselves. The president cannot be blamed for driving a wedge between the Democrats and their own convictions.

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We are sure that the president, like most people, does not wish to dwell on the subject of same-sex marriage. Yet he will have to talk about it more. If he does not, the press and the Democrats will be able to tell their side of the story—Bush as panderer to bigots—unrebutted. Other Republicans will also have to learn to discuss the issue with at least the same amount of knowledge, confidence, and ease that they bring to medical malpractice reform. Reporters flummoxed Scott McClellan, Bush's press secretary, by asking whether the president considered gay couples a bigger threat to marriage than no-fault divorce. It should not have been a tough question. The answer he should have given? "The president believes that the divorce rate is too high. But we have the divorce laws we have because of a democratic process. This situation is different: We have the courts imposing a radical change that the public opposes. It is that difference that justifies an amendment."

It would also be wise for the president to prevail upon legislators to change the wording of the proposed marriage amendment. Its second sentence declares, "Neither this Constitution or the constitution of any State, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups." The reference to "legal incidents" has confused many observers and led to disagreement about the amendment's impact on civil unions. The opponents of the amendment have made good use of this ambiguity.

But even if the president says the right things, gets his aides to do the same, and tinkers with the wording of the amendment, it may not be enough. Passing an amendment requires a two-thirds vote of Congress, followed by ratification by three-fourths of the states. The early statements of senators do not appear to presage passage. Supporters of the amendment claim that if Congress balks, they will be able to elect new congressmen to pass it. But this strategy, even assuming that it proved successful, would take time. During that time, we can expect the courts to keep changing the marriage laws. Massachusetts was the start. Indiana could well be next.

We are therefore pleased to learn that Sen. Orrin Hatch is introducing his own constitutional amendment. His version reads as follows: "Civil marriage shall be defined in each state by the legislature or the citizens thereof. Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to require that marriage or its benefits be extended to any union other than that of a man and a woman." This amendment would not only clearly allow civil unions to be enacted by legislatures; it would even allow legislatures to enact full-fledged same-sex marriage. But it would bar federal or state courts from imposing either.

Some conservatives will object that this amendment does not go far enough. But what it does is meet the challenge that actually inspired an amendment in the first place: the threat that judges will impose same-sex marriage or its equivalent in disregard of the public will. Hatch's language has the additional advantage of being clear and understandable to the layman. For most people, the notion that legislators should be making these decisions will seem like simple common sense.

We would be delighted if the marriage amendment, as currently proposed, were to pass. If it cannot pass, however, we hope conservatives will have the wisdom and maturity to change course—and take a look at Senator Hatch's proposal.

CULTURE WATCH

The Passion of the Reviewers

MEL GIBSON'S *Passion of the Christ* has, as they say, inspired moviegoers and critics alike. It has inspired opposite passions in each case. It has done phenomenally well at the box office under circumstances including a late-February release, subtitles, and what in ordinary Hollywood terms would be considered a major downer of a plot. The critics have, for the most part, torn into it with the fury of the Roman guards.

The movie is certainly not to all tastes, including all Christian tastes. As Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, archbishop of Paris, has warned, any cinematic depiction of the Passion will fail to capture its full meaning. Some of its aspects will be emphasized too much, others insufficiently. So Gibson's dramatic and even theological choices are open to serious question, and some of the reviewers have provided searching criticism.

Some critics have, however, seemed to regard themselves as gladiators in a culture war. Movie criticism has been an excuse for criticism of styles of Christianity or, indeed, Christianity itself.

We will not here repeat all the reasons for denying that the movie is anti-Semitic. It is notable that the only people who have found it to be anti-Semitic are people who are themselves immune to the disease. Maureen Dowd does not profess to find *herself* hating Jews after the movie. It is always the guy in the next seat over. No person has entered the movie neutrally disposed and come out saying that he now hates the Jews. The critics assume that other people, especially evangelicals in the hinterland, will be moved to anti-Semitism. And given that another motif of the critics has been that evangelicals are so stupid that they cannot recognize that the movie violates their own theology, we suppose the critics' view of them has a certain coherence. What the critics are panning here is American society.

What the critics are panning here is American society.

The gleefulness with which critics have flayed the movie's alleged anti-Semitism rather undermines the critique. If we really believed that millions of Americans were thrilled by a movie that was genuinely, at its core, anti-Semitic, we would be alarmed. The trouble with the reviewers who claim that this movie will lead to anti-Semitic violence is not that they are hysterical; it is that they are not hysterical enough for their concerns to be taken in good faith.

Gibson is said to have exculpated Pontius Pilate, and thus inculpated the Jewish leaders, by portraying him as doubtful and indecisive. To our minds, this criticism says more about the modern liberal celebration of doubt than it does about Gibson. A man who knows or strongly suspects that what he is doing is wrong is surely *more* culpable than a man who is certain that he is right. Nor can a man exculpate himself by shifting the blame for his own sin to others.

We are told that Gibson has erred in paying too much attention to the Passion, and not enough to the public ministry of

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Jesus; hence the movie lacks its proper context. David Denby in *The New Yorker*: "[Gibson] largely ignores Jesus' heart-stopping eloquence, his startling ethical radicalism and personal radiance. . . . [T]he movie Gibson has made from his personal obsessions is a sickening death trip."

For most Christians, however, Jesus Christ is not primarily a teacher of ethics. He is not the bearer of a message, but the message Himself. His crucifixion is the axis of history. Everything else in His life (and everyone else's) prefigured it; everything else in His life is illuminated by it. The Crucifixion is the context to end all contexts. If you do not understand that, you have not understood this movie.

There is, finally, the criticism that the movie is too violent. Most of Gibson's foes managed to withhold this criticism from *Saving Private Ryan* and *Kill Bill*. Now it is true that the Lord's suffering was spiritual as well as physical, and that its character was bound up with its being voluntarily undergone. The movie can reasonably be criticized for overdoing the physical dimension of the suffering. But let us also remember Flannery O'Connor's stricture: "To the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures." This is an era in which many people are powerfully drawn to the notion that the Lord can be reduced to a set of teachings and that we are pure spirits who just happen to be attached to bodies. For Christians, however, the fact that He became flesh is absolutely central. Perhaps a more gifted filmmaker could have depicted His spiritual suffering in a way that made viewers reflect on their own almost unbearable guilt for it. But the critics are saying that the film's unbearableness is what makes it suspect, when it in fact shows Gibson's success.

The reviewers do not, in general, object when movies make viewers uncomfortable. Indeed they applaud it. Nor, it need hardly be added, do they object when art takes liberties with Scripture. Compare the treatment of *The Last Temptation of Christ* or *The Da Vinci Code* with the niggling fact-checking employed against Gibson's *Passion*. They have attributed all manner of malign intent to Gibson. Whatever his sins, and whatever ours, the main intent is as clear as it has been missed by the reviewers. It is that this be a season of repentance.

notes & asides

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: The English language is not well. Our English has a sickness, caught not just overnight. It has taken many years; it now is an awful fright! Our mother tongue, most elegant, with meaning and melody both, is battered and twisted to pieces and degenerates in sloth. Discrimination, now forbidden, has disappeared in speech. Distinctions that were once quite clear are now quite out of reach. A sharp distinction marks two words: one word is *well*, the other, *good*. I'm feeling *well* and that is *good*. Too bad that's seldom understood. We disavow what's *healthful*, and say that it is *healthy*. Thus sloppy thought beguiles, insidious and stealthy. While no one looked upon it, it *snuck* with cautious stride, another insidious action that *sneaked* unseen inside. 'Twas once we strived *with hope* our work to expedite, but now we do a job to *hopefully* make it right. Personal pronouns give much grief; old rules are now unknown. 'Tis lost that *myself* is reflexive, where *me* is the proper pronoun. And there is common confusion whether to say *me* or *I*, as in give it "to him and *me*" rather than "to him and *I*." *Between* (betwain) the two of us, perhaps *among* a few, Mark Twain sure had it right when he measured fathoms two. Then there's the cause of *only*, quite commonly placed astray, the lonely *only* sitting far from where it's meant to stay. We *didn't* tell our teacher we missed what she had said, and we *never*, ever, told her we felt we'd been misled. We felt *like* we couldn't do it, ignoring the fact that we could, *as if* to tell all around us our grammar was really not good.

My head *lay* on my pillow as I was *lying* in bed, hoping that sleep could rid me of terrible speech in my head: Over and over, "*You-know, I'm like, ah—well, um, ah—you-know, I mean, well, ah, you-know, I'm like, ah, um*"—PLEASE NO!

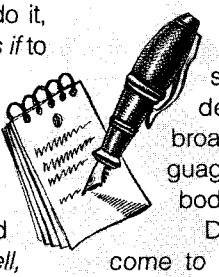
Sincerely,
Daniel R. Shawe
Lakewood, Colo.

Dear Mr. Shawe: You are in terrible pain! Maybe you should move?

Anxious, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: What in the world has happened to the short *e* sound in the English language?

Have you listened to the women on CNN lately? They have abandoned the short *e* sound and replaced it with a sound somewhat like the *a* sound in the word *add*. As a result some words are pronounced like other words and some just sound like unintelligible noise. For example, *bed* sounds like *bad*, *dead* sounds like *dad*, *head* is *had*, *Texas* is *taxes*, *better* is *batter*, and so on. One of the most irritating sounds is the one they make when they try to pronounce the word *west*. The *w* followed by their mystery sound is weird beyond description. Listening to a broadcast in this strange language is like listening to somebody singing off-key.



Do you think that they have come to believe that the short *e* sound is peculiar to southern pronunciation and therefore is to be avoided at all cost? I have heard that there is a "school" in Tennessee whose mission is "to help people get rid of their southern accent."

Please assure me that the whole world is not going insane.

Bast wishes,
J. Walter Lynch
Athens, Ga.

Dear Mr. Lynch: How can you ask for any such reassurance!

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ THE WORLD ■

Safety in Numbers

The limits of unilateralism

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

HAITI is a small island in the Caribbean. It has a population of 8 million, few natural resources, very little industry since most of its baseball factories closed, considerable potential for tourism (given that at present it has no tourists at all), widespread poverty, and no exports apart from exiles. It has recently been described as a "failed state" by those who wish the U.S. to embark on building a Haitian nation. But this description is misleading, for it suggests that there was once a recognizable Haitian state that has since declined into failure. In fact, with the exception of the period when U.S. troops installed and presided over a liberal constitution, government there has been systematic banditry interlaced with anarchy. In the 200 glorious years of Haitian liberty, only 9 of 47 Haitian "leaders" have fulfilled their terms of office. Eleven were ousted by the army, nine were toppled by mobs, another half-dozen were disposed of by armed rebellions, two were killed by mobs, one died "in a palace explosion," one died of a stroke during an armed revolt, one committed suicide, and one died "of an overdose of aphrodisiac." (*Haiti: A Basic Reference Book.*) None of the rest ended well.

In the past few weeks anarchy has gained the upper hand, but that will probably be brought to an end by the U.N.-approved international force—mainly American, French, and Canadian troops—that has just landed. The Congressional Black Caucus has been arguing that this force should return Haiti to the rule of systematic banditry in the person of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, now vacationing in the Central African Republic (another country with terrific potential for tourism). If they were to succeed, Aristide would be the first Marxist-Salesian-Bandit to be a revolving-door client of the U.S. He has already been restored to power once by the U.S., through the joint agency of Presidents Clinton and Carter. To impose him on them twice in a decade would suggest Americans harbored an unreasoning degree of hostility to Haitians; so, despite the CBC's apparently instinctive sympathy for anti-American black kleptocrats, that is unlikely to happen. Aristide should probably prepare for a long stay and open a Haitian restaurant in Bangui.

What will also not happen is a purely U.S. effort in Haitian nation-building. That is not because building a Haitian nation or a "successful" Haitian state is beyond the capacity of the U.S.—though Haitian history suggests that it may be beyond the capacity of the entire world—but because it is not a sufficiently powerful U.S. interest to justify expending the resources that would be required. Those advocating such a policy suggest that a Haitian failed state might conceivably pose a national-security threat to the U.S. Since faraway Afghanistan posed exactly such a threat, that is a perfectly fair point. We have a real interest in two things Haitian: preventing the illegal entry of Haitians into Florida, and ensuring that the island does not become a protective haven for al-Qaeda or other terrorist groups that might attack us.

Of what non-democratic and/or "failed" state, however, is that not true? Applying such criteria we could justify sending Marines and USAID officials into about 50 countries that have anti-American oppressive or collapsing governments likely to welcome terrorists or drive out ordinary citizens. That really would be "imperial overstretch," and it would strain the patience of the American people for overseas interventions. Obviously we need some criteria to decide which states pose the most dangerous threats requiring prompt American action—and which can be postponed until the Greek kalends. In the same broad Caribbean area, for instance, there is a much more serious and immediate threat to U.S. interests from Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. In addition to forging an alliance with Castro that might prolong Communist rule in Cuba after

U.S. MARINES IN PORT-AU-PRINCE ROBERTO SCHMIDT/AFP

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the dictator's death, the anti-American Chávez—a craftier version of Allende—is giving safe haven to guerrillas and narco-terrorists from neighboring countries, in a general pattern of regional destabilization. Both Cuba and Venezuela pose far more risks than Haiti. And if the U.S. were to respond to every Haiti with a policy to run the country as an American protectorate and apprentice democracy, it would lack the money and manpower to respond to genuinely serious threats.

That is why U.S. policy toward Haiti—which has been extremely successful in the past few weeks—seeks to involve other governments and the "international community" in restoring stability and order to the country. Other states then share the financial and other burdens of occupation; they provide a patina of multilateral respectability to the enterprise (don't laugh—it shuts up France and the U.N. General Assembly); the native population has little or no pretext to become anti-American; and the U.S. is able to call the shots on most things. Should it fail on this last score, the consequences are likely to be of Haitian rather than Iraqi proportions.

In short, global isolationism is dead. This was the idea, promulgated enthusiastically last year by some neoconservatives, that the U.S. did not need allies in its conduct of the worldwide war on terrorism, and that indeed the U.S. would be better off without them since they added little to American power and yet restrained the U.S. from pursuing its interests in a thoroughgoing way. And if allies were, owing to some mischance, needed, they should be recruited not from Europe—which was weak, economically declining, socialist, snooty, anti-democratic, anti-American, and anti-Semitic—but from countries such as Russia, India, Israel, and Turkey, which understood the threat of Islamic radicalism. This doctrine seemed for a while to be an impressive structure. Yet it has crumbled away to nothingness at the mere sight of an event as everyday as a Haitian rebellion. If the U.S. finds allies and the "international community" necessary, or even merely useful, to cope with a coup in Haiti, then doing without them as a general policy is a mad ambitious fantasy.

None of this is to argue that the U.S. should subordinate its interests to those of allies or to the decisions of international institutions such as the U.N. Even longstanding allies cannot be tamely allowed to frustrate U.S. policy by entangling it in endless multilateral haggling, as France attempted to do on the Iraq question. So there will be occasions when the U.S. should and will act alone and in defiance of the U.N. As Charles Krauthammer (always the most realist among the critics of realism) pointed out in his recent Irving Kristol lecture, however, these occasions will be relatively rare and prompted by some overriding U.S. interest. Indeed, Iraq might have been just such a case—except that the U.S. had allies on that occasion.

There will be occasions when the U.S. should and will act alone. There will be other crises in which the U.S. will want to recruit allies suitable to the occasion.

There will be other crises in which the U.S. will want to recruit allies suitable to the occasion and sympathetic to our concerns. Donald Rumsfeld's remark that the mission should define the coalition, not the other way round, is a prudent, realistic maxim in foreign policy. As in Haiti, so-called "coalitions of the willing" may be assembled for ad hoc interventions. But they will be more easily recruited and more practically helpful if they are part of a permanent alliance structure like NATO. And since allies have their own legitimate interests quite as much as the U.S., it makes sense to accommodate them in American policy if we want their support for our projects.

Finally, it should be conceded that "global isolationism" has never had the support of all neoconservatives. Their leading strategist, Richard Perle, has always argued the commonsense view that it is better to have allies than not. Global isolationism is less a considered neocon policy than an outburst from the neoconservative id out on a toot. As Ramesh Ponnuru observed in his NRO commentary on the Krauthammer lecture: He could agree with almost every argument in it while finding the rhetorical tone overly dismissive of the need for allies.

If it will make a prudent alliance strategy and limited institutional multilateralism more palatable to neoconservatives, we might agree to call them "the informal American empire," at least when speaking in domestic forums. But how is this informal empire to be run in such a way as best to advance U.S. interests? First, the U.S. should seek to maintain the regular Atlantic alliance and NATO in good repair. In current circumstances that means circumventing the anti-American forces in Europe and preventing those forms of European integration that damage NATO cohesion. This kind of alliance management is hardly a sexy topic, but it is vital. If it not done well, then the empire will gradually disintegrate. And, second, the regular alliance structure should be supplemented by "coalitions of the willing" where necessary.

But there is a third approach of increasing importance. In Haiti, Kosovo, Iraq, and East Timor, the informal American empire achieves its purposes through the U.N., international agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. These bodies now run entire countries as U.N. or NATO protectorates—and those countries are likely to grow in number over time. But they themselves are run by an odd coalition of able civil servants seconded from competent governments, utopian left-wing idealists, and outright crooks living the good life on the international taxpayers' tab. Together these groups are the so-called "tranzis" (from "trans-national"). By and large even the able civil servants among the tranzis are unsympathetic to U.S. foreign policy and conservative ideas.

Unless the U.S. is happy with a situation in which the U.S. Marines pave the way for German sociologists and Italian feminists to experiment on small nations and ex-failed states, then we should turn to either reforming or replacing the coalition of international agencies and NGOs that will soon be governing Haiti. For we have made it very clear that we are not prepared to govern Haiti from our own resources. **NR**

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An unknown story about John Kerry

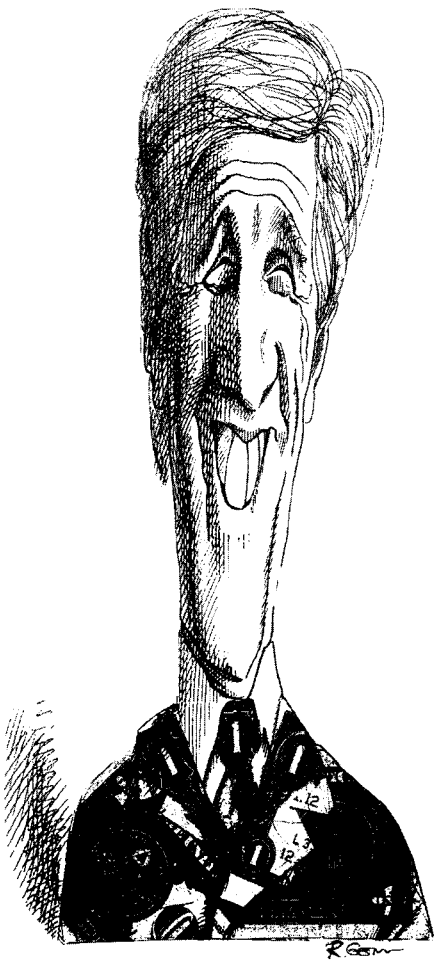
BYRON YORK

UNLESS you spend your time poking around the depths of Internal Revenue Service or Federal Election Commission websites, you've probably never heard of something called the Citizen Soldier Fund. Even if you study the nation's leading newspapers and watch the network newscasts, you still likely don't know much. But if you want to understand presumptive Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry, and if you want to know what lies behind one of his main campaign pledges, you need to know about Citizen Soldier.

The Citizen Soldier Fund was a political action committee, or PAC, created by Kerry in December 2001. At the time, it was clear that the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance reform bill, which Kerry strongly supported, would become law in the not-too-distant future. Even though he denounced unlimited "soft money" donations, Kerry wanted to use the pre-reform months to raise as much soft money as he could before it became illegal under McCain-Feingold. So he formed Citizen Soldier, which was designed to rake in soft money and then funnel it into Kerry campaign committees not legally allowed to accept such large contributions. Kerry also planned to direct Citizen Soldier money to the campaigns of political allies.

Kerry took a bit of heat when he announced the formation of his new PAC. Just a few days earlier, he had been bragging—as he has for years—that he did not accept money from PACs. He had also claimed, on CNN, "I don't take soft money." So when he created a soft-money PAC for himself, the *Boston Globe* wrote that the decision highlighted Kerry's "tendency to take seemingly contradictory positions that he maintains are nonetheless compatible." Sure enough, Kerry maintained that his position was consistent, because, he said, his new PAC would not accept contributions from those corporate political action committees—the bad PACs—that have been the target of Kerry's pro-reform attacks for years.

As it turned out, Kerry's critics didn't know the half of it. It's true that his PAC did not accept money from corporate political action committees; instead, it took money *directly from corporations themselves*. As Kerry patted himself on the back for not taking money from corporate PACs, he was just cutting out the middleman and accepting cash straight from those "powerful interests" he so often criticized.



ROMAN GENN

For example, Kerry accepted $30,000—three checks of $10,000 each—from the big insurance company American International Group, Inc., which has done extensive business in the Boston area. He took $20,000 from something called Jennings Road Management, which is one of a string of companies owned by Connecticut auto dealer Herb Chambers. He accepted $18,000 from Ameriquest Capital Corp., a California-based mortgage company that spent large amounts of money trying to stop last year's recall election. He took $10,000 for the San Diego-based SeaWest, Inc., which generates electrical energy from wind power. He took $10,000 from the MassMutual financial group. He accepted $10,000 from AT&T, and $5,000 from BellSouth.

Kerry also took large contributions from individual supporters who just happened to run big businesses. Among them was John Manning, head of Boston Capital Corporation, who gave $55,000; Patrick McGovern, head of International Data Group, who gave $50,000; and Miami lawyer Milton Ferrell, who contributed $59,000.

In all, the Citizen Soldier Fund raised nearly $1.4 million. According to the pro-reform Center for Responsive Politics, Kerry gave the largest single portion of the fund's proceeds—$436,319—to himself, in the form of contributions to his other political committees. It was a move that some reformers likened to money laundering: Kerry collected soft-money contributions for Citizen Soldier, and then shifted those resources to other parts of his campaign that were prohibited by law from directly accepting soft-money contributions.

Many of Citizen Soldier's other expenditures, though they did not go to Kerry himself, were also politically advantageous to Kerry. By the Center's count, Citizen Soldier also gave $147,000 to Democrats in Iowa, $120,000 to Democrats in New Hampshire, $89,000 to Democrats in Florida, and $58,000 to Democrats in South Carolina. "I'm sure the meaning of that was not lost," says one reformer. "It's a way to make friends and influence people."

It was all legal—Sen. John Edwards, for example, had a similar fund that was also quite generous in primary and cau-

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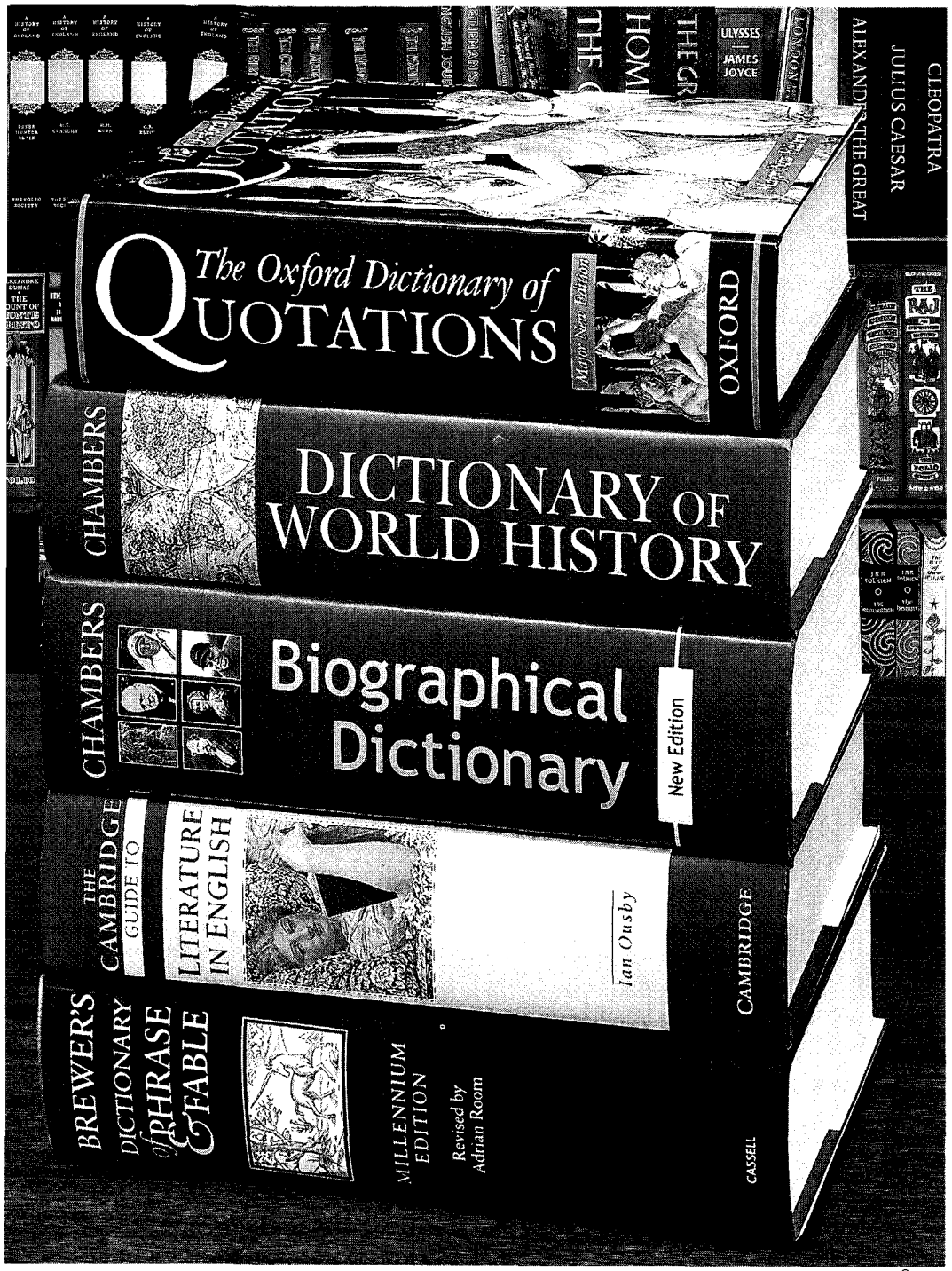

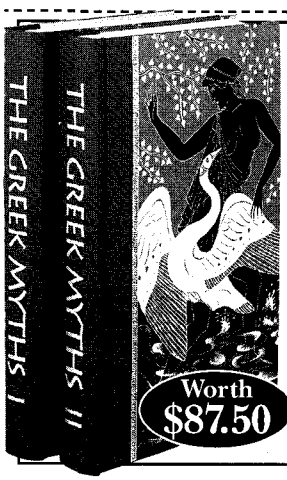

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cus states—but the way Citizen Soldier spent its money seemed to fly in the face of Kerry's stated reason for forming the PAC. Back in December 2001, when Kerry was criticized for getting into the PAC business, he claimed that he did it to help speed the passage of campaign-finance reform. "I've come to acknowledge the unpleasant and unfortunate truth that campaign finance and other critical political reforms will remain stymied in Congress until Democrats obtain real working majorities in Washington and in state legislatures across the nation," Kerry said. But it turned out the Democrat he most wanted to support was John Kerry.

Kerry also broke another pledge that he had made when he created Citizen Soldier. Perhaps wanting the new PAC to appear cleaner and more reform-minded than other, more openly political, organizations, Kerry originally promised that Citizen Soldier would not accept contributions of more than $10,000 per year from any one donor. Less than three months later, Kerry was accepting donations that exceeded that limit.

The passage of McCain-Feingold—formally known as the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act—did put Citizen Soldier out of business. But Kerry had gotten $1.4 million before the window closed.

Now Kerry has made his attack on "special interests" a centerpiece of his stump speech. "We're coming, you're going, and don't let the door hit you on the way out," he says to them at almost every campaign appearance. He also continues to claim that he does not take money from those interests. For example, in February, at the Democratic candidates' debate in Milwaukee, Kerry said: "I am the only United States senator who has been elected four times voluntarily refusing to ever take in any one of my races one dime of political-action-committee, special-interest money. The only money I've accepted is money from individual Americans."

The records of the Citizen Soldier Fund tell another story. Indeed, they document what is perhaps the most marked contrast yet discovered between Kerry's rhetoric and his behavior. Lucky for him, at least so far, the story hasn't become more widely known. **NR**

■ THE NATION

Virginia Is for Taxers

Are Republicans Republicans in the Old Dominion? Anywhere else?

STEPHEN MOORE

When it comes to political ineptitude, this year's prize goes to the Republican party of Virginia. For 130 years—all the way back to Reconstruction—the GOP tried to seize control of the legislature from the old Boll Weevil Democrats. In 1999, the Republicans finally captured majorities in both the state house and senate—and the party leaders have now rewarded voters for their good sense by proposing the biggest tax increase in the state's history. The $3 billion GOP-sponsored tax hike has ignited a civil war within the party and has stunned political observers not just inside the Old Dominion, but around the country.

Virginia's debacle comes on the heels of a financially chaotic year for many other states—in which eight of the ten largest tax hikes nationwide were signed into law by Republican governors, including Bob Taft of Ohio, Kenny Guinn of Nevada, and Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho.

Will this turn into a full-fledged national trend, with Republicans tossing aside the anti-tax message that has been electoral paydirt for the party since Ronald Reagan's election in 1980? The outcome of the debate in Richmond in the weeks ahead could go a long way toward answering this question.

Republicans in the Virginia senate are proposing increases in income, sales, gas, and tobacco taxes, as well as hikes in some fees. Under their plan, the average

Mr. Moore is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and president of the Club for Growth.

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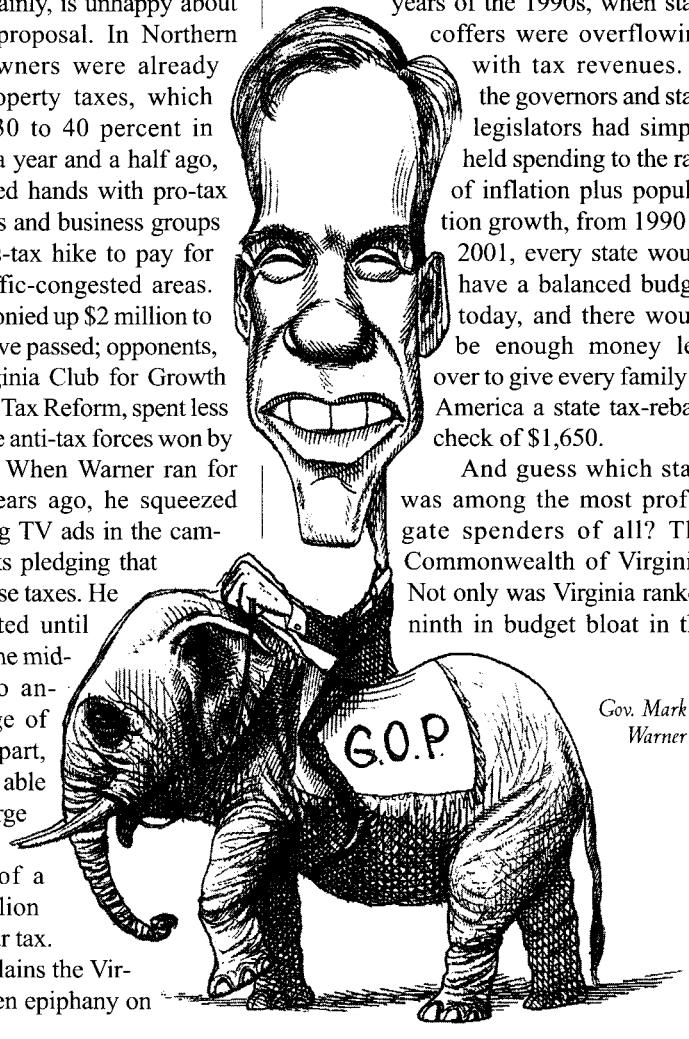
family would see its taxes rise roughly $1,000 a year. The Virginia Democratic party, recently moribund, is now in an understandable state of euphoria. Gov. Mark Warner—a charismatic and ferociously ambitious liberal lawyer who reminds many observers of another personable southern governor, Bill Clinton—has been politically reborn. Warner desperately wants to raise taxes to fund activist programs like free pre-school and fat pay raises for teachers' unions, but until now he's been stymied by GOP resistance to new taxes. His governorship had been, by virtually all accounts, a dismal failure until the GOP decided to perform this political version of CPR on him. The Republicans not only accepted Warner's flimsy argument for new taxes, they upped the ante with a tax increase twice as large as his. Suddenly Warner is seen as the reasonable centrist; some Democrats are gleefully wondering aloud whether the Republicans' tax hike is excessive.

The public, certainly, is unhappy about the tax-increase proposal. In Northern Virginia, homeowners were already fuming about property taxes, which have soared by 30 to 40 percent in recent years. Just a year and a half ago, Gov. Warner linked hands with pro-tax senate Republicans and business groups to sponsor a sales-tax hike to pay for new roads in traffic-congested areas. Business groups ponied up $2 million to help get the initiative passed; opponents, including the Virginia Club for Growth and Americans for Tax Reform, spent less than $100,000. The anti-tax forces won by 55 to 44 percent. When Warner ran for governor three years ago, he squeezed through by running TV ads in the campaign's final weeks pledging that he would never raise taxes. He conveniently waited until three weeks after the mid-term elections to announce his change of heart. For their part, Republicans were able to gain power in large part by sailing on the gale winds of a famous tax rebellion against the state car tax.

What, then, explains the Virginia GOP's sudden epiphany on taxes? It's not so much that Republicans have fallen in love with taxes, it's that they've been seduced by tax-eating special-interest groups. The state Chamber of Commerce, deep-pocketed real-estate developers, and high-tech executives have all been agitating for higher taxes for years. They stuff the campaign coffers of Republican candidates, so the GOP is loath to say no to their demands. Alas, there is too much truth to the liberal attack against Republicans, to the effect that they sell their souls to tax-eating corporate-welfare recipients; Virginia is Exhibit A. House Republicans, incidentally, came up with a clever plan to raise taxes on the very business groups that are clamoring loudest for the higher taxes; that plan elicited predictable and sanctimonious howls of protest from business leaders about how these new taxes would destroy jobs.

The story of the fiscal crisis, in Virginia as in so many other states, is a story of a reckless spending binge during the go-go years of the 1990s, when state coffers were overflowing with tax revenues. If the governors and state legislators had simply held spending to the rate of inflation plus population growth, from 1990 to 2001, every state would have a balanced budget today, and there would be enough money left over to give every family in America a state tax-rebate check of $1,650.

And guess which state was among the most profligate spenders of all? The Commonwealth of Virginia. Not only was Virginia ranked ninth in budget bloat in the 1990s, but in the last five years Virginia's legislature managed to outspend Gray Davis of California—an amazing feat. And they're still at it: Warner's budget calls for a 13 percent increase in state spending over the next two years, at a time of virtually no inflation. All the Republicans have to do is hold the state's budget growth to twice the rate of inflation and they will be able to eliminate the budget deficit without a solitary spending cut.



ROMAN GENN

Gov. Mark Warner

Peter Ferrara, president of the Virginia Club for Growth, has vowed to affix a "scarlet letter T" to the office doors of every Republican who votes for new taxes, and then raise money to defeat him in primaries next year. Tax increasers are as welcome inside the GOP as "the Sheriff of Nottingham was in Sherwood Forest," Ferrara says. Adds Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform: "Just as the Coca-Cola Company wouldn't permit a single bottle of Coke to be sold with a rat's head swimming in it, Republicans can't allow taxes to be raised anytime, anywhere on their watch."

Ever since the 1992 election, which President Bush lost owing largely to his reversal on "no new taxes," national Republicans have sworn off tax hikes. To be a Republican in the 21st century, says GOP political consultant Jeff Bell, "now means that you are opposed to taxes always and everywhere." But at the state level, the tax distinction between Republicans and Democrats has become dangerously obscured. It is precisely because the anti-tax message was such a potent political weapon in the 1990s that few Democrats in the states are now willing to sacrifice their political careers for tax increases; strangely, Republicans in many states are filling the void as emboldened tax-hikers.

That's why the outcome of the Virginia tax debate could have reverberations nationally. If the pro-tax forces successfully infiltrate the GOP in conservative Virginia, they could do so in dozens of other states and muddy the national economic debate as well. The only good news here is that if Republicans do succeed in raising taxes in Virginia, their punishment will be sure and swift. They could be banished into the political wilderness for another 130 years. And this Republican voter would be first in line at the voting booth to keep them there. **NR**

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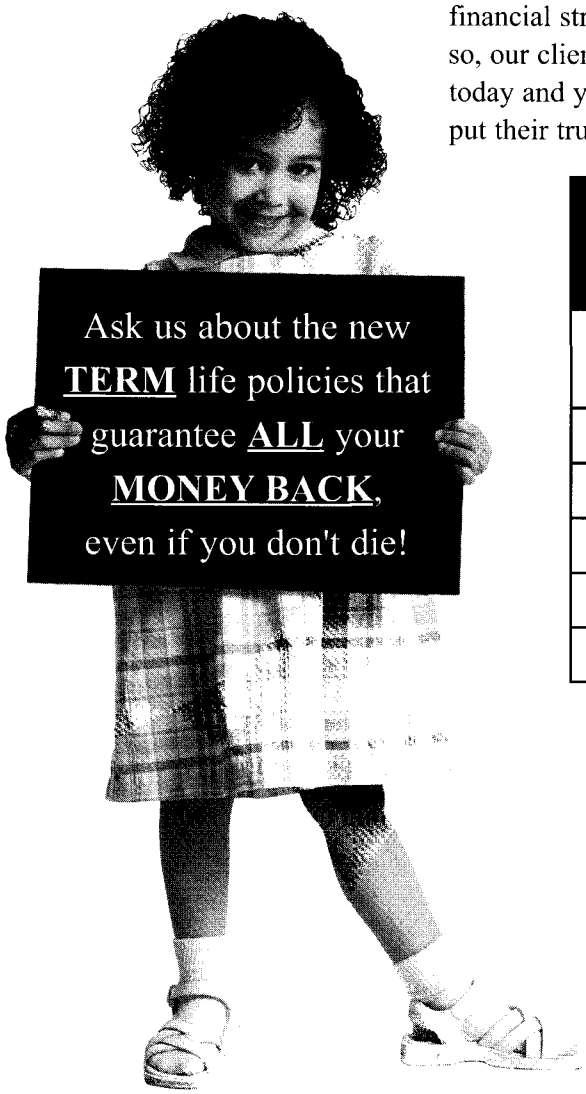

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■ THE LAW

The Abolition of Sex

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JOHN DERBYSHIRE

With recent events in Massachusetts and California, homosexual marriage—an idea that seems not to have occurred to anyone at all in the entire span of human history until about five years ago—is now a daily topic in our newspapers and TV programs. While there is certainly a great deal to be said about homosexual marriage, I have come to believe that this issue is merely an epiphenomenon, the visible manifestation of some deeper trend. To be precise, I think that what is under way here is a program to purge the very notion of sex from all our laws. This is not just a campaign to permit men to marry men, and women women; it is a campaign for the abolition of sex. Nor is it the homosexualists who are in the vanguard here, but the *trans*sexualists—persons who wish to be not the sex Nature, in forming their bodies, intended them to be, but the other one.

I had better clarify my usage. I don't mean that we are witnessing an attempt to stamp out the intimate act. Probably nothing could be further from the minds of the activists promoting this revolution. No: Here I am using "sex" in the first of the senses offered by Merriam-Webster's *Third*: "one of the two divisions of organic, especially human, beings respectively designated male or female." In what passes for academic literature in this field, the word "gender" is now commonly used with this denotation. If I were more modern-minded I would say "the abolition of gender." However, when I have used "gender" in this sense in the past, I have got angry letters and e-mails from fellow conservatives. After reading through several dozen of these, I have concluded that my correspondents are correct. Furthermore, if you read much of the propaganda of transsexualist agitators, you realize that there is, for them, a key distinction between "sex" and "gender." "Sex" is what someone else thinks you are, based on some objective criterion (visual inspection, chromosome count, biochemical analysis); "gender" is *what you feel yourself to be*, tests and evidences notwithstanding. The latter notion, being subjective, is of course good; the former is correspondingly bad. See how the wheel has turned: "Sex" is once again a dirty word!

So my argument is that these recent shenanigans at top right and bottom left of our country are the first battles in a much broader war, a war to expunge sex from the public sphere altogether.

DARREN GYGI

This came to me in a flash of understanding while I was reading the Gender Recognition Bill, which was passed by Britain's House of Lords last month. This bill, the fruit of many years' lobbying by transsexualist groups, is a remarkable document. The essence of it is that if you are a man who wishes to be known as a woman (or, of course, vice versa), the public authorities will oblige you. They will even issue you a new birth certificate, with your new sex written in. You will thenceforth be a woman, for all legal and political purposes.

There will be some formalities to be gone through. The bill requires that you present yourself to a Gender Recognition Panel, armed with a certificate from either "a registered medical practitioner practising in the field of gender dysphoria, or . . . a chartered psychologist practising in that field." You must offer some evidence that you have been living as a member of your new sex for two years. You do not, however, need to have undergone sex-reassignment surgery. A man with a full set of tackle can now be a woman under British law. He and another man, similarly equipped, could present themselves as man and woman at a church, and be married. You see why I believe the homosexual-marriage issue to be a secondary phenomenon here.

This bill has, as I said, passed the House of Lords. The debates were not without some droll moments.

> *Lord Tebbit*: Clause 16 provides that if an Earl re-registers himself as a woman, he fortunately does not have to become a Countess. That is a most liberal part of the Bill; for such small mercies we should be grateful. I therefore presume that if a King should undertake gender reassignment, he could rule as a woman, but he would still be a King. I must say that that would raise some curious thoughts.
>
> *Earl Ferrers*: My Lords, my noble friend's speech is so fascinating that it has stimulated my thoughts. What happens if an Earl becomes a woman? Does his son then become the Earl?
>
> *Lord Tebbit*: My Lords, I really do not know. Presumably, as he would remain an Earl rather than becoming a Countess, his son would have other problems on his mind than whether he would immediately succeed to the title.
>
> *Baroness O'Cathain*: My Lords, let us hope that my noble friend is not going to do it.
>
> *Lord Tebbit*: Indeed, my Lords, we hope that my noble friend's interest in the matter is not entirely personal.

At the time this issue of National Review goes to press, the bill, having passed the House of Lords, is being debated in Commons.

Baroness O'Cathain attempted to introduce an amendment to the bill, specifying that "a body which exists for the

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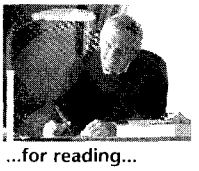

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purposes of organised religion may prohibit or restrict the participation in its religious activities or ceremonies of persons whose gender has become the acquired gender under this Act . . . if the prohibition is necessary to comply with the doctrines of the religion." This amendment was defeated on a vote, 144 to 149. (Nobody who follows Church of England affairs will be much surprised to learn that opposition to this amendment was led by the Right Reverend Peter Selby, Bishop of Worcester.)

Another amendment was proposed by old Thatcherite war-horse Lord Tebbit, specifying that "no two persons each possessing XX chromosomes nor each possessing XY chromosomes, nor each possessing genitalia appropriate to the same sex, may be married the one to the other." That one went down 46 to 121. Not only does the Gender Recognition Bill open the door to homosexual marriage, it effectively prohibits a clergyman from refusing to conduct such a marriage. And if, after conducting a marriage between two people he assumed to be of opposite biological sex, the clergyman discovers that they were, in fact, of the same sex, he may not tell anyone of his discovery. Should he do so, he will have broken the law, and will face a £5,000 fine!

In line with the thinking of most British citizens, while religion was given short shrift by the assembled peers, sport occupied a great deal of their time. If Hulk Hogan were to get himself "recognized" as a woman in British law, could a women's wrestling team exclude him without opening itself to a discrimination lawsuit? Their lordships pondered mightily before passing a subtle amendment permitting sports bodies to make their own determinations of sex, where considerations of safety or fair competition might otherwise be compromised. You could practically hear Britain's swelling legion of trial attorneys rubbing their hands with glee at this point.

As an American friend remarked when I explained the bill to him: "Presumably the next step is to allow individual men or women to legally declare themselves to be trees or turnips." Presumably so; though that step will of course require parliament to first pass a Species Recognition Bill. **NR**

■ **THE MEDIA**

Going *Timesless*

Who dares give up the 'newspaper of record'?

JAY NORDLINGER

LAST fall, President Bush caused something of a scandal when he made an admission to Fox News's Brit Hume: He is not much of a newspaper-reader or TV-watcher; he prefers to get his news from his staff, with no opinion mixed in. For many people, this revelation was further proof that our president is a dolt, too abnormal to serve in that job.

I have an even more shocking revelation: Many people in this country don't read the *New York Times*, and by "people," I don't mean Ma and Pa, I mean major writers and journalists, plenty of whom live in Manhattan.

Mark Helprin, the novelist and essayist, does not live in Manhattan—he lives in Virginia—but he might still be expected to read the *Times*. He does not, however. And when certain people find this out, "They look at me as if I had just slaughtered Mary's little lamb." They are incredulous, and perhaps a little frightened. How can someone—especially on so high a level—function without the *New York Times*? Helprin manages, reading many newspapers and magazines—just not the "paper of record." He stresses that one should never read anything out of habit; if reading becomes habitual rather than helpful, give it up.

Our colleague David Frum tells about the time he was working out on the treadmill, reading *The Economist*, as he had weekly for years. And "suddenly it hit me: I hate this magazine. I have hated it for a very long time." He tossed that issue aside and never looked back. (Needless to say, he is still made aware of certain articles in *The Economist*: such as hostile reviews of his books.)

William F. Buckley Jr. once remarked—as a prelude to some complaint about the *Times*—that doing without that paper would be "like going about without arms and legs." The *Times* is still the essential news habit of much of elite America (pardon the term). And, of course, this paper affects all of America's media, whether individual Americans know it or not. "No one here in Duluth reads the *New York Times*," I sometimes hear, "so why should I pay attention? Aren't some of you guys obsessed?" But what our Minnesotan fails to appreciate is that everyone who supplies him his news—whether in print or over the air—*does* read the *Times*. And is profoundly influenced by it. The paper is in the bloodstream of this nation's media.

Nevertheless, more and more public-affairs types are going without it, and they don't feel ignorant. Moreover, they feel liberated. I have a friend who, many years ago, gave up reading anything about race. Anything at all. That was just a personal policy, formulated and stuck to. And he said that he found himself happier. So it is with many people who have gone *Timesless*. We are talking mainly about conservatives, of course, but their beef is not so much with the *Times*'s bias as with its partisanship (if you will accept the distinction). Oh, yes, and with its pretentiousness.

Many of these ex-*Times* readers can give you the exact year, or even the exact day, of their withdrawal. "Four years ago." "Nine years ago." "Last June." Quite a few seem to have quit the paper in recent years, since 9/11, and since the Jayson Blair scandal (he was the con artist who was a rising star at the *Times*), and since former editor Howell Raines's bizarre crusade against Augusta National Golf Club.

Michael Barone, the all-knowing Washington political journalist, stopped reading the *Times* in August 2002. (Like many ex-*Times* readers, however, he still sees the occasional article on the web, or checks in with a preferred columnist.) Barone finds that he is saving a lot of time. He also finds that he is on a surer news footing: Too many of the *Times*'s stories were questionable, "and I thought, 'I have to go on television, I have to be accurate, and this isn't helping.'"

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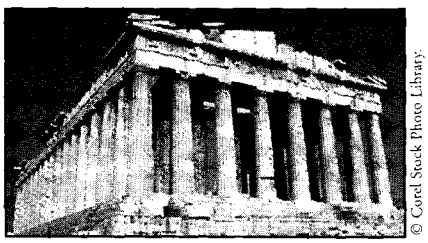

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Another writer reports that he read the *Times* regularly "from 1965 until July 26, 2001," when a last-straw item appeared. "I do get pertinent articles on the Internet and see the occasional copy in a hotel, but the *Times* is out of my life after 36 years, and I find I have more time in the day without sacrificing important knowledge of the world." This writer does miss the computer section, however—called "Circuits." And the obituaries (those pages being the very last ones some of us would do without).

A number of writers and editors feel they need to look at the *Times* just to know what the Gray Lady is up to. Says one major New York editor, "I read it for the same reason you had to look at intelligence reports on Germany in World War II." A noted Washington-based political journalist says, "I consider reading it an odious professional duty." He complains not just about the news and editorial pages. (The radical journalist George Seldes, in one of his books, had a chapter called "How To Read the Editorial Pages." It consisted of one word: "Don't.") No, "it's the arts pages and the food pages and the headlines and the captions—it's every nook and cranny of that paper."

It will probably not surprise his critics that Rush Limbaugh doesn't read the *Times*; he hasn't "for a couple of years." First, "there is no longer enough difference between the editorial pages and the news pages, particularly the front page." Second, "I found myself questioning the accuracy of the paper based on my own knowledge. I too often wondered, 'Hmmm—is that true?'" Third, "the *New York Times* is just one of many nearly identical components of the mainstream media. The point is, I know what I'm going to see or hear anywhere in the mainstream media. They are all a giant cliché now. I know them like I know my whole naked body, not just the back of my hand."

What about the fear that, if you don't read the *Times*, you'll miss out on some "national conversation"? Among the scoffers is Peter Kirsanow, a Bush-appointed member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission: "I've gone long, blissful stretches without reading the *Times* and have found that during such periods I remain as well informed as when I read it regularly—but without the residual anger, anxiety, and irritability. Since reading the *Times* is not mandatory where I live—in the mid-Atlantic states—even among the elites—I'm not viewed as illiterate simply because my conversation for the day hasn't been directed by R. W. Apple or Maureen Dowd."

Speaking of the sticks: Sometime in the mid 1990s, the *Times* wrote a blistering editorial about Jesse Helms. The senator's new, eager press secretary quickly drafted a letter to the editor, and took it in to the senator. Helms, of course, had not seen the editorial. He glanced at the letter and said, "That's nice, son. Do whatever you want with it. But understand something: I don't care what the *New York Times* says about me, and no one I care about cares what the *New York Times* says about me." Therein lay some of the senator's power.

Aside from bias, partisanship, pomposity, or other defects, some just find the paper dull. The southern (and decidedly un-dull) writer Dave Shiflett says, "I still read the *Times*, but not like I used to. It's simply a bore most days, despite its evangelical political mission, which should at least liven up its prose. No such luck. A dull evangelist is easy to ignore, especially when there are so many vibrant news sources available. There's simply nothing special about the *Times*, or at least special enough to warrant a wade through what is, on a daily basis, the flattest selection of prose published anywhere outside the State Department."

Hilton Kramer, editor of *The New Criterion*—and for 17 years a top critic at the *Times*—once made a quip about Max Frankel, editor of the *Times* from 1986 to 1994: "He gave New Yorkers their Sundays back"—so dull (in this view) had that behemoth become.

The proliferation of media has lessened the importance of the *Times*; so have the newspaper's mistakes (which include too great a kinship with the Democratic National Committee). To be sure, there are some unmissable individuals in the paper, such as John F. Burns in Iraq. But, seemingly every day, journalists and others are discovering that they don't have to consume the whole deal.

A final story. Michael Ledeen, the foreign-policy analyst, hasn't read the *Times* in years—but when young, he did read a columnist named John Crosby in the *New York Herald Tribune*. Crosby did not like radio. He wrote that one of his great pleasures in life was to look at the radio schedule every morning and then realize, throughout the day, what he was missing. For example, he'd be in the park with his granddaughter and say, "Becky, guess what we're not listening to on the radio now! Isn't that great!" Says Ledeen, "I feel the same way about the *New York Times*. When someone says, 'Did you see such and such in the *Times* today?' I can always smile and say no."

And yet some of us can't wean ourselves away, and may never. Lou Cannon, the veteran journalist associated with the *Washington Post*, says, "My view of the *Times* is that it is what it is, and there's nothing I can do about it." So true of this great paper, and of much of life. **NR**

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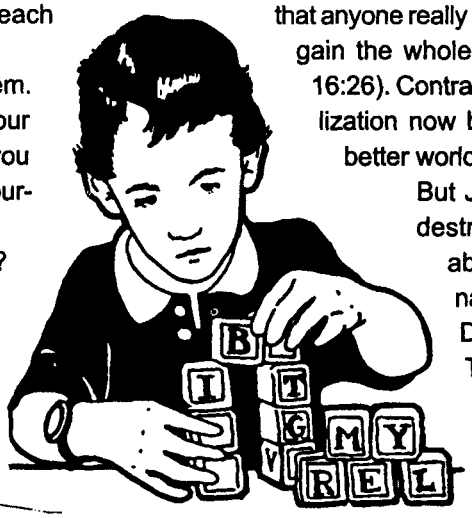
Wanna Design Your Own Religion?

And Jesus said, "Go forth into all the world and sample the truths of all religions."

O.K., Jesus didn't really say that. But wouldn't it be nice if He had? We could dabble in the world's religions and — since their truth claims and practices often contradict one another — we could just pick what we like from each and leave the rest.

We already have "designer" this and that. Why not a designer religion to suit each individual's fancy?

Yes, we know, there's a slight problem. With what authority could we concoct our own religion? Someone said that if you want to start your own religion, get yourself crucified and rise on the third day.



So, what did Jesus actually say? Known as the Great Commission, here it is: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Mt. 28:19-20).

All other religions deny that Jesus was given "all authority in heaven and on earth." So either this Jesus is who He says He is or He's a crazed megalomaniac. If He's the latter, you really couldn't trust anything He said. If He is who He says He is, that means missionary work, evangelization, and witnessing by word and deed.

But there are lots of lukewarm Laodicean Christians (Rev. 3:14-16) who want to somehow split the difference. They don't want to proclaim the Gospel, but neither do they want to let go of Jesus altogether. They'd rather do social work and engage in interreligious dialogue, searching for some greater, more agreeable truth that has so far eluded everyone.

In the Catholic Church the result has been the waning of the missionary spirit. Yes, the word "evangelization" is still used, but there's little sense anymore that anyone really needs Jesus, that anyone could gain the whole world and lose his soul (Mt. 16:26). Contrary to Church teaching, evangelization now basically means working for a better world.

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RIGHT FIGHTS

In Pennsylvania and elsewhere, conservative voters need to get serious

RAMESH PONNURU

THE most important election this year is the presidential election. A strong case can be made that the second most important election is the one that will occur on April 27, when Pennsylvania Republicans will decide whom to nominate for the U.S. Senate: the incumbent senator, Arlen Specter, or the conservative challenger, Congressman Pat Toomey. For conservatives who generally support President Bush but are concerned about the Republican party's drift under his stewardship, the Specter–Toomey race, and a handful of other primary elections, offer the opportunity to make a midcourse correction.

This is important for conservatives, because we are in the middle of one of our seasons of discontent. Conservatives are always tempted, in such moments, to throw up our hands in disgust. Here and there one hears calls for conservatives to sit out the November elections. The question that the Pennsylvania campaign—and a few others—raise is whether conservatives are prepared to do something constructive about their dissatisfaction.

There are two theories that underlie the sit-it-out strategy. The first is that there's no difference between the Republican and Democratic candidates, and it will make no difference who wins. The second is that the Bush Republicans need to be taught a lesson about what happens when they drift from conservative principles. The trouble with the first theory is that it is false. A conservative who cannot see this in the middle of a controversial war, a conflagration over marriage and the courts, and bitter debates about taxes may be beyond persuasion. The parties are further apart from each other than they were in 2000 or 1992, and a change in the balance of power between them will have consequences on many issues.

The second theory is risky. It may be true in some circumstances that conservatives can pull the Republican party, and the political center of gravity, their way by not voting or, better, by voting for a conservative or libertarian third party. But in at least as many cases, the message sent would be perverse: that conservatives are too implacable to allow politicians to appeal simultaneously to them and to centrists. The lesson would then be that there is no right-of-center political platform capable of attaining an electoral plurality.

These theories have an appeal that goes beyond their merit: They rationalize political laziness as the highest form of principle. The alternative response to dissatisfaction with the status quo, in the country and in the Republican party, involves work. It is not to decrease conservative activism in behalf of less-than-ideal candidates, but to increase conservative activism for better ones. Too many conservatives have gotten into the bad habit of acting as though all it takes to pull the center rightward is to publish op-eds and issue press releases complaining about the Bush administration. The press is more than happy to provide publicity on such occasions: "Bush's Base Bolts," p. A1. Criticism of Bush is often deserved, and often useful. But electing more true conservatives to Congress would be better.

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THE CASE FOR TOOMEY

Which brings us back to Toomey's race against Specter. If you are a conservative upset about the Republican establishment's big spending and accommodationism—especially if you're upset enough to be thinking about boycotting Bush's re-election—there is no excuse not to be supporting Toomey. Specter has moved a little bit to the right for the primary season, but he remains, as my colleague John J. Miller put it six months ago, the worst Republican senator. He is enthusiastic about spending: Citizens Against Government Waste gives him an anemic 51 percent rating. He supports the labor-union agenda, taxpayer funding of abortion, cloning, and quotas. He usually opposes tort reform, although on a few occasions it has been possible to drag him into supporting it.

When the Senate was debating a bill to make sure that American soldiers could not be hauled before the International Criminal Court, he was the only Republican senator to vote against it. (John Kerry voted for it.) He's an opponent of school choice, calling it unconstitutional and expressing the hope that the Supreme Court will come around to this view. His latest cause is settling the asbestos-litigation mess by putting taxpayers on the hook for the bills. The prospect of Specter's becoming chairman of the Judiciary Committee, as he is in line to do if he gets re-elected, makes conservative Senate staffers toss and turn at night. They know that Chairman Specter will no longer have to worry about offending Pennsylvania conservatives. This will be his last term; he will be 80 by the time of the next election.

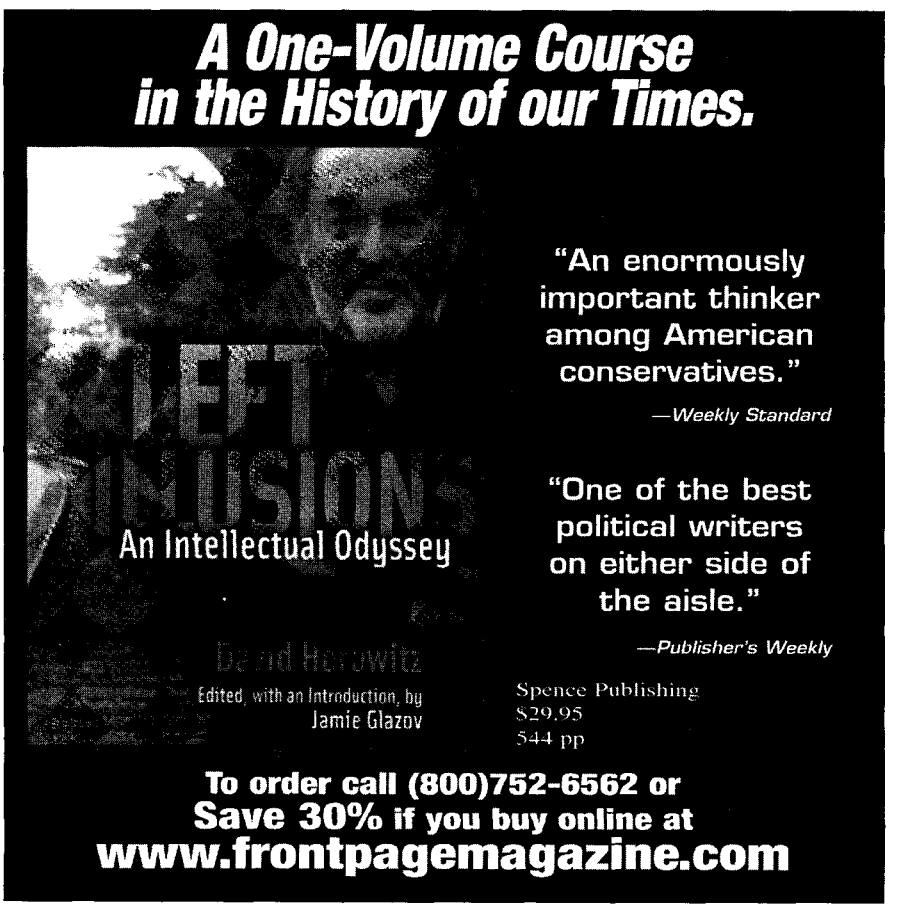
Toomey, on the other hand, is a "taxpayer superhero," according to Citizens Against Government Waste. He's a supply-side tax-cutter. His primary interest in serving in Congress has been to shrink the size and scope of the federal government. He is a strong advocate of a private-account option for Social Security. He is also, within the limits of his congressional district—a heavily Democratic steel town—a free trader (far more so than Specter). Toomey is a strong ally of social conservatives, supporting bans on cloning and abortion, and the Federal Marriage Amendment. He has voted against amnesties for illegal immigrants.

Taking down an incumbent senator in a primary is hard. The White House and Rick Santorum, Pennsylvania's other Republican senator, have made Toomey's race harder by coming out strong for Specter. Santorum and his colleagues have endorsed Specter in part because he is already part of the club. But there's another reason for the endorsements, a reason that may sway some conservative voters, too. The only half-good justification for a conservative to support Specter over Toomey is that Specter would have a better chance than Toomey of keeping the seat Republican in November. With Republicans holding only 51 seats in the Senate, the majority is (supposedly) at stake.

But that argument has a number of holes. First, Toomey would have a good shot at winning the general election. He has won over Democrats before, in his district. His ideological profile—pro-private accounts, pro-life—is close to that of Santorum, who won re-election comfortably in 2000. Santorum, indeed, ran six points ahead of Bush. Second, it is not clear that having nominal control of the Senate matters that much in terms of legislative accomplishment. The Senate is not like the House, where electing a 218th member, even a lousy one, spells the difference between the passage of conservative and liberal bills. Third, Republicans are almost certainly going to keep the Senate even if they lose Specter's seat. The worst case is that Republicans lose a seat in Illinois, gain a seat in Georgia, and win at least two of the races in Oklahoma, Louisiana, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina. That would leave them up one. If they lose Pennsylvania, too, they will be right back where they started, at 51. Well, not quite: They will be a more conservative caucus, and one whose most liberal members know that they can go only so far before they run the risk of losing a primary.

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUNDING

The Pennsylvania Senate race is the starkest liberal–conservative match-up in a Republican primary anywhere in the country this year. But there are some other Senate races where conservatives have a stake in the outcome. In Georgia, two conservatives—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congressman Mac Collins and businessman Herman Cain—are running against congressman Johnny Isakson, who is more socially liberal. They're all trying to fill the seat that Democrat Zell Miller is giving up. Everyone thinks that the winner of the Republican nomination is likely to win the general election, so the question here is who would be the best senator. Conservatives need not worry that splitting their vote between Collins and Cain will give Isakson the nomination. As long as they can hold Isakson below 50 percent, there will be a run-off. The first round is July 20.

Kirk Humphreys, the mayor of Oklahoma City, has gotten the support of the entire Republican establishment in his state. He is a moderate conservative who can spout both conservative boilerplate and nonpartisan boilerplate. (His bottom line on Social Security: "We must take the best and the brightest ideas—regardless of party affiliation—and meld them into a solution that allows the federal government to meet its obligation without overly burdening a new generation.") Former congressman Tom Coburn, who is planning to disrupt the coronation, is, on the other hand, one of the most activist conservatives ever to have served in the House. He regularly gave his party's leadership heartburn, for all the right reasons. As a senator, he would be something like Jesse Helms and Phil Gramm rolled into one. The Republican winner will be running against Brad Carson, a smart, conservative Democratic congressman. Coburn might be the stronger candidate against him. It's a generally Republican state. Since Coburn used to hold Carson's seat, he would be able to contest the Democrat's geographic base. The primary is July 27.

In Illinois, the most attractive and popular candidate, Jack Ryan, is running to the right of his major opponents. He is a sort of Jack Kemp Republican, one who spends much of his time explaining how his ideas—principally school choice—will help the poorest of the poor. The general election is going to be an uphill climb, however, in a state that has been going heavily Democratic in presidential campaigns. The primary is on March 16. In South Carolina, conservatives are guaranteed to have one of their own as the Senate nominee to replace Fritz Hollings, a Democrat who's retiring. Jim DeMint stands out as the only free-trader in the race. He is also the only innovative, policy-oriented candidate. DeMint, like Toomey, has been a leader on Social Security. If he loses the June 8 primary to former governor David Beasley, the message to Republicans in the state will be: Stay away from free trade.

The House Republican primary races offer few choices between conservatives and liberals. In the third district of Kansas, my home district, conservative Kris Kobach is running against moderate Adam Taff. Taff is a decent candidate for the district and came close to knocking off the Democratic incumbent, Dennis Moore, in 2002. Taff is fairly conservative as party moderates go. While he favors legal abortion, for example, he also favors private accounts for Social Security. Kobach, on the other hand, is a smart conservative across the board. The national party establishment was surprised when Taff beat its candidate in the 2002 primary. Now it's making the opposite mistake of backing Taff. The Republican party in Kansas is badly factionalized, but Kobach would stand a better chance of healing it—if he can run a more grassroots campaign and stop stressing his Washington credentials (such as having worked with John Ashcroft on homeland security). The primary is August 3.

Two Texas races pit activist conservatives against don't-rock-the-boat conservatives. Arlene Wohlgemuth was willing to stand up to her party and chop the state budget as a state legislator. She's facing off against Dot Snyder, a more establishmentarian type. In another district, Bill Lester, with the backing of the free-market Club for Growth Political Action Committee, is running against Mike Conaway, the former head of the local Chamber of Commerce. Those races take place on March 9.

Two liberal Republican congressmen, Wayne Gilchrest of Maryland and Sherry Boehlert of New York, are facing challenges. It will be difficult to beat either one. But David Walrath came from nowhere to nearly defeat Boehlert in 2002, and he might be able to pull off an upset on September 14.

SENDING A MESSAGE

In many of these cases, and especially in Pennsylvania, the conservative candidate has to fend off defeatism. The conventional wisdom is that Specter, for example, can't be beaten. But heeding the conventional wisdom can be costly. In 2000 in New Jersey, everyone wrote off Scott Garrett's challenge to liberal Republican congresswoman Marge Roukema. He made the race a squeaker—and if conservatives had known he would do that well, they would have probably been able to turn the race. In 2002, everyone knew that Democrat Janet Napolitano was going to beat conservative Republican Matt Salmon in the Arizona gubernatorial campaign. That race ended up being so tight that it wasn't called until the weekend after the election. If the national Republican party or conservative activists had known the race would be that close—if they had not given up prematurely—they could have won it. Hindsight is 20/20, of course, but conservatives could well feel the same way if Specter wins by a point.

> In many cases, and especially in Pennsylvania, the conservative candidate has to fend off defeatism.

Stephen Moore, head of the Club for Growth, says, "If Toomey can pull off this upset, it's going to be a rating of 10 on the Richter scale in terms of the political earthquake it would create. It would be a way for conservatives to express their frustration with the direction the Republican party has gone, especially on big-government issues. Specter, on the Appropriations Committee, is the symbol of the waste and excesses in Washington."

A Specter victory will send a message, too. If he wins, Republicans from the president on down will have an answer to the question of how seriously they should take conservative complaints about the party establishment's willingness to support ever-higher spending. The answer will be: not very. **NR**

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■ AT WAR

'He That Stands It Now . . .'

A writer responds to his critics

DAVID FRUM

WHEN Richard Perle and I published *An End to Evil* at the beginning of the year, we touched off about as nasty a literary brawl as the book-review pages have witnessed in some time. Michiko Kakutani, the daily book reviewer for the *New York Times*, was reduced to sputtering indignation: "absolutist . . . cocky . . . swaggering . . . smug . . . shrill . . . deliberately provocative." "Reckless disregard for complexity, shades of grey or the possibility of unintended consequences," huffed *The Economist*. And so on and on it went.

Well, we can't complain. We started it.

Richard and I began work on *An End to Evil* because it seemed to us that much of our political and policy elite was losing its stomach for the fight against terrorism. They had been nervous enough when President Bush overthrew the Taliban: Senator Tom Daschle was worrying about the American military mission in Afghanistan as early as March 2002. Since the invasion of Iraq, however, many in Washington have suffered something close to a moral collapse. Sen. John Kerry, the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, even argued in January that the War on Terror should revert to being primarily an intelligence and law-enforcement matter: the same strategy that failed so dismally in the 1990s.

Our purpose in writing *An End to Evil* was to do our part to help summon Americans back to the mood of determination and resolution of September 2001. We opened with a quotation from Tom Paine: "He that stands it *now* deserves the love and thanks of man and woman." We tried in the spirit of Paine to persuade Americans that this too is a time when it is necessary to take and hold our stand.

Not everybody agrees. But for too long, those who disagree with the strong anti-terror policies of the Bush administration have evaded their responsibility to offer adequate alternatives. It's a striking fact, for example, that when two leading counterterrorism officials of the Clinton National Security Council published *their* book on terrorism in 2002 (*The Age of Sacred Terror* by Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon), they spent so long tracing the origins of the terror threat—and devising excuses for the Clinton administration's failure to come decisively to grips with it—that they left themselves virtually no room at all to offer any suggestions about what might actually be done to protect the country from that threat.

Mr. Frum is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

Even now, with the nation readying itself for an election campaign in which war and peace will loom large, those who oppose strong anti-terror policies still have not articulated their alternative. Should we leave Iraq? No answer. What if anything should we do about Saudi Arabia? Radio silence. And how about that Iranian bomb? Mumble, mumble. What we get instead is a lot of angry shouting about neocons, neocons, neocons—as if the nation's foreign-policy doves had been simultaneously seized by a wonk's version of Tourette's syndrome. And yet we seem to hear the same themes, and the same errors, repeated again and again. Richard and I group these errors into three main categories: errors of the intellect, errors of the will, and errors of the heart. In our view, these erroneous beginnings explain why our principal critics arrive at their flawed, often fatally flawed, conclusions.

ERRORS OF THE INTELLECT

One common criticism is that Richard and I slight the importance of the Israeli–Palestinian dispute. This criticism occupies almost the entirety of Thomas Powers's review in *The New York Review of Books*. "Everything [in *An End to Evil*] is clear and all choices are stark—except when it comes to the West Bank and Gaza. . . . China, Russia, the CIA, the State Department, 'the underlying cultural malaise' in the Middle East—all these he [referring to my co-author, Richard Perle] can fix. But when it comes to the longest-running open sore in the clash of civilizations, his advice to the Palestinians is what Lucy in her role as psychiatrist used to tell the troubled Charlie Brown—'Get over it!'"

Yet there is something very peculiar about this line of criticism. It's based on a pair of assumptions: 1) that the creation of a Palestinian state would somehow ease our terrorism problem, and 2) that this state could be swiftly achieved if only the U.S. would put more pressure on Israel to offer greater concessions. Our critics, however, never quite articulate these assumptions—very possibly because they understand how silly these assumptions would sound if pronounced aloud.

Would it be a good thing to solve the Palestinian problem if it could be solved? Obviously yes. A solution would reduce the amount of human unhappiness in the world, deny America's enemies a talking point, and enhance the security of our Israeli ally. Would such a solution ease the terrorism problem? Well, Osama bin Laden himself has repeatedly made clear that the Palestinian problem constitutes only one of his grievances, and nowhere near the most important: In his first fatwa, issued in 1996, Chechnya, Bosnia, and even the Ogaden Desert and Tajikistan all concerned him much more. By 1998, the Israeli–Palestinian issue had risen to third place, still behind America's Iraq sanctions and the basing of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. In his statements since 9/11, he has also complained of Australian support for the independence of East Timor, the abolition of the caliphate by Kemal Ataturk in 1924, and the Christian reconquest of Spain in 1492. Osama bin Laden is a man with a large agenda, to put it mildly.

As for the fancy that the creation of a Palestinian state would somehow discredit extremism in the Islamic world—and thus win the U.S. Muslim friends against al-Qaeda—that idea too flunks the plausibility test. Through the 1990s, the Clinton administration did just what people like Powers would have President Bush do. The Clinton administration set the creation of a Palestinian state as one of its supreme foreign-policy priorities, and pushed the Israelis to

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one concession after another. In 1996, for example, President Clinton pressured Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu into surrendering Hebron to the Palestinian Authority. And what did the Clinton administration get for its hard work? Nineteen ninety-six was not only the year of bin Laden's first fatwa. It was also the year that Saudi Arabia stonewalled the U.S. investigation into the Khobar Towers attack that killed 19 American service personnel; that a huge cache of Iranian weapons intended for use in terror attacks against European Jews was intercepted in Antwerp; and, finally, that the allied coalition against Saddam began to crumble.

The harder the U.S. worked to gain independence for the Palestinian Authority, the faster Islamic extremism seemed to grow in Egypt and the Gulf. Not only did the Clinton administration's policy fail to help; if anything, the drive to help create a Palestinian state caused American leaders to become more passive in the face of terror attacks. Clinton's fears of upending Israeli–Palestinian negotiations were very probably the most important reason for his weak response to the African embassy attacks in 1998 and the bombing of the USS *Cole* in 2000.

Are our critics aware of this history? I have to believe that they are. So what seems to be at issue in their complaints about our "neglect" of the Palestinian problem is less a point of principle than a point of etiquette. In a discussion of the Middle East, an omission of a bow to the essentiality of a Palestinian state is like the omission of a bow to the family idols in a classical Roman household. Nobody much believes in the idols. But it is considered a shocking violation of propriety and decency to express one's skepticism where the children might hear.

If the overestimation of the importance of a Palestinian state is the most pervasive error about terror, it is far from the most blinding. That dishonor can be claimed by Daniel Benjamin, in his January 23 review in Canada's *Globe and Mail*: "Perhaps the most dispiriting fact about *An End to Evil* is not the cartoonish prescriptions but the authors' misunderstanding of the new terrorism. Frum and Perle, like many in the Bush administration, believe that all hostile Muslims are in cahoots, and that the high road to destroying al-Qaeda is through the demolition of the rogue regimes that supposedly nourish it. Their absolute certitude blinds Frum and Perle to the reality that we face a global insurgency of radical Islamists who have nothing to do with Saddam Hussein, Iran, or Syria. Globalization and technological advances have placed enormous destructive power in the hands of non-state actors who cannot be deterred and whose religious ideology resonates in the minds of dissatisfied people spread across the globe. This is a far more complex problem than dealing with Iran or Syria."

This concept of al-Qaeda as some virtual-reality entity, operating beyond the reach of Middle Eastern governments, was a favorite conceit of the Clinton administration's counterterrorism team. Yet even as the Clinton administration was describing al-Qaeda as a "non-state" actor, al-Qaeda forces were building a terrorist infrastructure on the territory of one state (Afghanistan) using hundreds of millions of dollars raised with the indulgence of another (Saudi Arabia). Had the rulers of Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia objected to al-Qaeda's activities, it's doubtful that the group could have done business on anything like the scale it did. And today what survives of the senior leadership of al-Qaeda is hiding in Iran, again obviously with the permission of the Iranian government, as Iranian officials themselves confirm.

No dispute: Al-Qaeda is not the *agent* of some Middle Eastern government. But it could never have achieved its murderous effectiveness if the governments of the Middle East had all been hostile to it. Richard and I make this point in *An End to Evil* through an analogy to a famous credit-card commercial. "Box cutters and airline tickets: $100,000. A global network of training and recruitment: hundreds of millions of dollars. A secure piece of real estate from which to operate: priceless."

And while the states connected to al-Qaeda were in the first place Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, other terrorist groups of concern to the U.S. have other political connections. The terrorist groups that carried out the attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001 and risked provoking a nuclear war on the Subcontinent, could not survive without the indulgence of Pakistan. Hezbollah—which killed some 300 Americans in Lebanon in the 1980s—wholly depends on Syria and Iran.

The nexus between the terror groups and the terror states is a dangerous reality.

The nexus between the terror groups and the terror states—the linkage that prompted Michael Ledeen to coin the term "the terror masters"—is a dangerous reality. The Clinton administration's vision of terror groups as global freelancers, like SPECTRE in the old James Bond movies, was a dangerous illusion—or, worse, an excuse for inaction in the face of a gathering menace to American security and freedom.

ERRORS OF THE WILL

A great many reviews have complained that *An End to Evil* is too blunt, too bold, too unnuanced. It was this alleged lack of nuance that incensed Michiko Kakutani, disappointed the editors of *The Economist*, and offended my old friend Fareed Zakaria, who reviewed the book for the Sunday *New York Times*. Fareed by and large agreed with most of our recommendations—and yet he was appalled by the forceful tone with which those recommendations were presented: "Frum and Perle wish to revolutionize whole cultures, change regimes, deter potential threats, 'end evil' itself. But they cannot abide the means to achieve it, which inevitably involves contact with other countries, negotiations, compromise, empathy. . . . Occasionally, Frum and Perle fear that a policy they suggest might seem too middle of the road, so they disguise it with acerbic rhetoric."

Now of course nuance is a very fine thing. The world is complex, and our descriptions of the world have to be complex too. And certainly it is better to express yourself with restraint. On the other hand, it is possible to pile up so many cautions and exceptions that you end up saying nothing at all. As the poet Roy Campbell once

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wrote to someone who offered him the same advice that Fareed offers Richard and me: "You praise the firm restraint with which they write— / I'm with you there, of course: / They use the snaffle and the curb all right, / But where's the bloody horse?" Right now, the great problem afflicting American foreign policy is not lack of nuance, but lack of direction. Our bipartisan foreign-policy elite—the Scowcrofts, the Brzezinskis—has gone into open rebellion against the Bush administration. The leaders of the Democratic party are now denying that the War on Terror is a war at all. And the administration itself is wracked by doubt and conflict over future policy toward Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. In other words, the topic for debate at the moment is not, "How can we improve the effectiveness of our foreign policy?" It is: "What should that policy be?"

Fareed belongs to that centrist consensus that complains that the Bush administration is not doing its work as effectively as it could. And who would disagree? Do any of us do our work as effectively as we theoretically could? But all too often these complaints about *how* things are done operate as substitutes for the hard work of thinking about *what* should be done. The cult of technique can become an excuse for endless talk; complaints about the lack of it can sometimes conceal a lack of backbone.

The War on Terror is a new thing, and it has disturbed many comfortable and profitable old relationships. Many of our foreign-policy elite have important stakes in those relationships. They cling to them despite accumulating evidence that those relationships have become obsolete, or even dangerous. In the face of this kind of entrenched opposition, how can those who recognize the need for new ideas force change? In American policy, there is one sure way to transform any debate: Invite the larger public to join it. And if you want to invite the public in, you have to send them an invitation in a language they can read.

ERRORS OF THE HEART

Since 1940, American democracy has faced three great ideological enemies: first Nazism, then Communism, and now militant Islam. And in each of these struggles, a certain number of Americans have found themselves out of sympathy with the nation's cause. During the Cold War, many Americans succumbed to the ideology of the enemy. Nazism was and militant Islam is much less attractive to Americans. But in both cases, many Americans wished to opt out of the fight—not because they loved the enemy, but because they so intensely hated one of the enemy's targets: Britain back in 1939-41; Israel today.

It was no surprise to Richard and me that *An End to Evil* earned generally negative reviews from Middle Eastern officials and their state-controlled media. Former Saudi intelligence chief (now ambassador to Britain) Prince Turki al-Faisal responded to the book by denouncing Richard as a "Zionist extremist." The former boss of Gamal Abdul Nasser's propaganda network denounced Richard as "the other face of Osama bin Laden" in a column in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* on January 27. And a columnist for the Beirut newspaper *Al-Hayat* charged on January 24 that Richard and I belonged to the real "axis of evil; Israel, neo-conservatives and all those supporting or protecting them. This axis of evil is the reason behind the global hatred of the U.S., and the crazy terrorism that everyone suffers from."

This Middle Eastern style of rhetoric was reproduced in a pair of vehement and lengthy reviews: one published on February 23 in *The Nation*, the flagship magazine of the American Left; the other on March 1 in *The American Conservative*, a magazine that seeks to redefine the American Right. It says something interesting and maybe important that the two magazines made almost exactly the same points in almost precisely the same way.

In *The Nation*, Michael Lind suggested that try as Richard and I might to "ransack American history" to prove our patriotic bona fides, the truth was that we were swayed by our "ethnic, religious, or regional biases." We had "hijacked U.S. foreign policy" on behalf of "Israel's illiberal Likud party and . . . the Protestant Christian Zionists of the Southern religious right." Pat Buchanan does not share Lind's dislike of southern Protestants; but otherwise, the two perceive the world and American politics in almost exactly the same way—indeed, at one point Lind reproaches "neoconservatives" for having unfairly criticized Buchanan's "blood-and-soil nationalism." In *The American*

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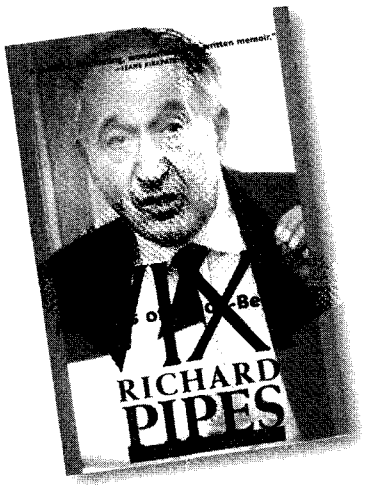

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Conservative, Buchanan returns the compliment by translating Lind's overwrought prose into plain English. "Their agenda," Buchanan says of Richard and me, "is not America's agenda, and their fight is not America's fight." And: "They are dangerously close to imbibing the poisonous brew that drove Jonathan Pollard to treason: If it is good for Israel, it cannot be bad for America." Can't get clearer than that.

It is bizarre, however, to be accused of being next door to treason by a writer who can shrug off the possible deaths of thousands or tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of Americans as if they were a thing of little importance. Buchanan writes: "How is our survival as a nation menaced when not one American has died in a terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11?" Yes, 3,000 Americans died that day. But so what? "Three thousand men and boys perished every week for 200 weeks of [the] Civil War." And even if al-Qaeda were to acquire weapons more deadly than 19th-century musketry—well, again so what? "Germany and Japan suffered 3,000 dead every day in the last two years of World War II, with every city flattened and two blackened by atom bombs. Both came back in a decade."

A year ago in these pages I noted that Buchanan, in the best *Nation*-magazine tradition, had affixed the blame for 9/11 to the United States itself. "9/11 was a direct consequence of the United States meddling in an area of the world where we do not belong and where we are not wanted," he said on *Hardball* on September 30, 2002. "We were attacked because we were on Saudi sacred soil and we are so-called repressing the Iraqis and we're supporting Israel and all the rest of it."

But even I never imagined that he would advance to the next and still more abject step of explicitly accepting the risk of massive further American civilian casualties as preferable to a policy of national self-defense that in his imagination might in any conceivable way offer collateral benefits to Israel. Buchanan took offense when I suggested in NATIONAL REVIEW that he had ceased to love his country. It might be more exact to say both of him and of the line of critics who share his animus and his resentments that if they do still love their country, they nonetheless love it far less than they hate Israel.

* * *

Throughout the writing of *An End to Evil* and the two months of discussion afterward, Richard Perle and I strove to do our part to revitalize the patriotic consensus of the first weeks after 9/11—to give Americans a definition of victory in this war and a plan for how to achieve that victory. For me, this is a new task. For Richard, it is the culmination of 35 years of devoted service to the United States and American security.

We would certainly never insist that our ideas will prove correct in every particular detail. We will certainly be wrong about many things, possibly even many important things. We stand ready to be criticized and corrected. But too many of the criticisms and corrections we have thus far received reflect not the failings of our work, numerous as those surely are, but the blinders, weaknesses, and prejudices of the opponents of this war and this administration.

These blinders, weaknesses, and prejudices must be overcome, not for the sake of any one book or any two writers, but for the sake of victory in the great conflict of our time. **NR**

■ **PUBLIC POLICY**

Not Amnesty but Attrition

The way to go on immigration

MARK KRIKORIAN

THE issue of what to do about illegal aliens living in the United States is often presented as a Hobson's choice: either launch mass roundups to arrest and deport 9-million-plus people, or define away the problem through legalization.

The second option—amnesty—is the one President Bush chose in his January 7 speech on immigration. It also underlies many congressional proposals, from the McCain-Kolbe-Flake and Hagel-Daschle bills in the Senate to the House Democratic leadership's plan unveiled in late January.

Few among the political elite entertain any alternative. At a recent panel discussion on the president's immigration proposal, Margaret Spellings, the president's chief domestic-policy adviser, reacted with a demure chuckle to the suggestion that we enforce the law.

The commentariat is more explicit. Not content to politely ignore the notion of enforcing the law, the *Wall Street Journal*, for instance, has flatly asserted that it's not possible, a "fantasy" of the "extreme," "nativist," and "restrictionist" Right. Meanwhile, the Manhattan Institute's Tamar Jacoby wrote in *The New Republic* of "futile law enforcement" and how "the migrant flow is inevitable."

Fortunately for America there is a third way, between the politically impossible and disruptive approach of mass roundups on one hand, and the surrender of our sovereignty by the open-borders Left and its libertarian fellow-travelers on the other. This third way is attrition, squeezing the illegal population through consistent, across-the-board law enforcement to bring about an annual reduction in the illegal population rather than the annual increases we have seen for more than a decade. Over a few years, the number of illegal aliens would drop significantly, shrinking the problem from a crisis to a manageable nuisance.

OF VELVET FISTS . . .

This isn't just a wonkish daydream. There is significant churn

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in the illegal population, which we can use to our advantage. According to a 2003 INS report, thousands of people stop being illegal aliens each year. From 1995 to 1999, an average of 165,000 a year went back home; the same number got some kind of legal status, about 50,000 were deported, and 25,000 died, for a total of more than 400,000 people each year subtracted from the resident illegal population. The problem is that the average inflow of *new* illegal aliens was nearly 800,000, swamping the outflow and creating an average annual increase of close to 400,000.

The solution, then, is to increase the number of people leaving the illegal population and to reduce the number of new illegal settlers, so that there is an annual decline in the total number. This is a measured, Burkean approach to the problem. It doesn't aspire to an immediate, magical solution to a long-brewing crisis, but rather helps us back out of an untenable situation that we helped create through our inattention to the law.

This begs the natural question: "But aren't we already enforcing the law?" If not, as a *Wall Street Journal* editorial has asked, "Then what is it we've been doing for 20 years now?" The answer lies in the old Soviet joke: "We pretend to work and they pretend to pay us."

Since 1986, Congress has passed muscular immigration laws and then made sure that they were not enforced. In that year, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was enacted, which traded an illegal-alien amnesty for a first-ever ban on the employment of illegal aliens. The point was to demagnetize the strong pull of good jobs—the main reason illegals come here in the first place.

More than 2.7 million illegals got legalized up front, with promises of tighter enforcement in the future. But the law itself was hobbled such that it became unworkable. Only if employers had a means of verifying the legal status of new hires against Social Security or INS databases could the law succeed—but Congress refused to require the INS to start developing such a system. Instead, employers were expected to do the verifying themselves, by examining a bewildering array of easily forged documents, and then they were threatened with discrimination lawsuits by the Justice Department if they looked too hard. It would be hard to imagine a system more obviously intended to fail.

Eventually, even this handicapped setup was sabotaged. After catching flak for workplace raids, the INS in 1998 decided to try a new approach to enforcing the hiring ban. Instead of raiding individual employers, Operation Vanguard sought to identify illegal workers at all the meatpacking plants in Nebraska through audits of personnel records. The INS then asked to interview those employees who appeared to be unauthorized—and the illegals ran off. The procedure was remarkably successful, and was meant to be repeated every two or three months until the whole industry was weaned from dependence on illegal labor.

Local police were very pleased with the results, but employers and politicians vociferously criticized the very idea of enforcing the immigration law. Nebraska governor Mike Johanns organized a task force to oppose the operation; the meat packers and the ranchers hired his predecessor, Ben Nelson, to lobby on their behalf; and, in Washington, Sen. Chuck Hagel made it his mission in life to pressure the Justice Department to stop. The INS took the hint, and all but gave up on enforcing the hiring ban nationwide.

Nor is this the only example of tough-looking laws that go unenforced. In 1996 Congress passed a large immigration bill, which included a provision that sought to punish long-term illegal residence by barring illegals from future re-entry for three or ten years, depending on the length of the initial unlawful stay. Its scope was limited in any case, since it applied only to people who actually left the country and then tried to return, but it was denounced at the time by the usual suspects as "radical" and "draconian." But an examination of the law's results shows that, in its first four years, the bar prevented fewer than 12,000 people from re-entering the United States.

Even the expansion of border enforcement follows this pattern of ineffectuality. The Border Patrol has doubled in size since 1996, accounting for the lion's

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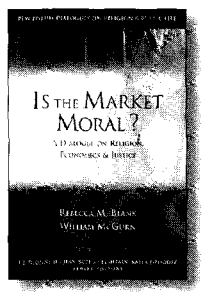

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share of increased resources for enforcement. Its 10,000 agents are better equipped and doing a better job than ever before. But since, as any agent will tell you, the Border Patrol alone can't control illegal immigration, there's little danger that such increased capacity will actually curtail the flow. Again, it's a policy that appears tough, but isn't—a velvet fist in an iron glove.

NETWORKING

Why does this happen? It is a manifestation of the yawning gap between public and elite opinion on immigration. The laws need to look tough, with promises of robust enforcement, to satisfy public concerns. But immigration's relatively low political importance for most people ensures that the elite preference for loose enforcement will be satisfied in the end.

But isn't the elite right in this case? Isn't immigration inevitable? Hardly. No one wakes up in Paraguay and decides, "Today, I will move to Sheboygan!" Immigration can take place only if there are networks of relatives, friends, and countrymen directing immigrants to a particular place. And these networks are a creation of government policy, either through proactive measures or through permitting networks to grow through non-enforcement of the law.

As I've written in these pages before, when we stepped up immigration enforcement against Middle Easterners (and only Middle Easterners) in the wake of 9/11, the largest group of illegals from that part of the world, Pakistanis, fled the country in droves to avoid being caught up in the dragnet.

And in an inadvertent enforcement initiative, the Social Security Administration in 2002 sent out almost a million "no-match" letters to employers who filed W-2s with information that was inconsistent with SSA's records. The intention was to clear up misspellings, name changes, and other mistakes that had caused a large amount of money paid into the system to go uncredited. But, of course, most of the problem was caused by illegal aliens lying to their employers, and thousands of illegals quit or were fired when they were found out. The effort was so successful at denying work to illegals that business and immigrant-rights groups organized to stop it, and won a 90 percent reduction in the number of letters to be sent out.

WAR OF ATTRITION

We know that when we actually enforce the law, eroding the illegal-immigration population is possible. So what would a policy of attrition look like? It would have two key components. The first would include more conventional enforcement—arrests, prosecutions, deportations, asset seizures, etc. The second would require verification of legal status at a variety of important choke points, to make it as difficult and unpleasant as possible to live here illegally.

> The morale of immigration workers would soar in the wake of a real commitment to law enforcement.

As an example, look at the Philippines and Indonesia. Both are populous, poor countries on the other side of the world, and yet the 2000 Census found about 19 times more Filipino immigrants in the United States than Indonesians, 1.4 million versus 73,000. Why? Because we ruled the Philippines for 50 years as a colony and maintained a major military presence there for another 50 years, allowing extensive networks to develop, whereas we have historically had little to do with Indonesia.

Granted, interrupting such networks is harder than creating them, but it is not impossible—after all, the trans-Atlantic immigration networks from the turn of the last century were successfully interrupted, and atrophied completely. And, to move beyond theory, the few times we actually tried to enforce the immigration law, it worked—until we gave up for political reasons.

During the first several years after the passage of the IRCA, illegal crossings from Mexico fell precipitously, as prospective illegals waited to see if we were serious. Apprehensions of aliens by the Border Patrol—an imperfect measure but the only one available—fell from more than 1.7 million in FY 1986 to under a million in 1989. But then the flow began to increase again as the deterrent effect of the hiring ban dissipated, when word got back that we were not serious about enforcement and that the system could be easily evaded through the use of inexpensive phony documents.

As to the first, the authorities need to start taking immigration violations seriously. To use only one example, people who repeatedly sneak across the border are supposed to be prosecuted and jailed, and the Border Patrol unveiled a new digital fingerprint system in the mid '90s to make tracking of repeat crossers possible. The problem is that short-staffed U.S. attorneys' offices kept increasing the number of apprehensions needed before they would prosecute, to avoid actually having to prosecute at all.

It would be hard to exaggerate the demoralizing effect that such disregard for the law has on the Homeland Security Department's staff. Conversely, the morale of immigration workers would soar in the wake of a real commitment to law enforcement. We've already seen a real-world example of this, too. I met with deportation officers in a newly formed "fugitive operations team" in Southern California who, unlike other immigration personnel I have spoken with, were actually excited about their jobs. They still have gripes, but the clear political commitment to locating and deporting fugitive aliens communicates to them that their work is genuinely val-

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ued by their superiors all the way up to the White House.

Other measures that would facilitate enforcement include hiring more U.S. attorneys and judges in border areas, to allow for more prosecutions; passing the CLEAR Act, which would enhance cooperation between federal immigration authorities and state and local police; and seizing the assets, however modest, of apprehended illegal aliens.

But these and other enforcement measures will not remove most of the illegal population—the majority of illegals will have to be persuaded to deport themselves. Unlike at the visa office or the border crossing, once aliens are inside the United States, there's no physical place, no choke point at which to examine whether someone should be admitted. The solution is to create "virtual choke points"—events that are necessary for life in a modern society but are infrequent enough not to bog down the business of society.

This is the thinking behind the law banning the employment of illegal aliens—people have to work, so requiring proof of legal status upon starting a job would serve as such a virtual choke point. As discussed above, in the absence of a verification mechanism, such a system couldn't succeed. But the president signed into law at the end of last year a measure to re-authorize and expand the verification pilot programs that immigration authorities have been experimenting with since the mid 1990s.

Building on this fledgling system, we need to find other instances in which legal status can be verified, such as getting a driver's license, registering an automobile, opening a bank account, applying for a car loan or a mortgage, enrolling children in public schools, and getting a business or occupational license.

An effective strategy of immigration law enforcement requires no booby traps, no tanks, no tattoos on arms—none of the cartoonish images invoked in the objections raised routinely by the loose-borders side. The consistent application of ordinary law-enforcement tools is all we need. "Consistent," though, is the key word. Enforcement personnel—whether Border Patrol agents, airport inspectors, or plainclothes investigators—need to know that their work is valued, that their superiors actually want them to do the jobs they've been assigned, and that they will be backed up when the inevitable complaints roll in.

And, finally, this isn't root-canal Republicanism, bitter medicine we swallow for the greater good. Enforcement of the immigration law may not be popular among the elite, but actual voters across the political spectrum are all for it. As Alan Wolfe wrote in *One Nation, After All*, the difference between legal and illegal immigrants "is one of the most tenaciously held distinctions in middle-class America; the people with whom we spoke overwhelmingly support legal immigration and express disgust with the illegal variety."

If only our political leadership felt the same way. **NR**

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- College Catalogue, page 16

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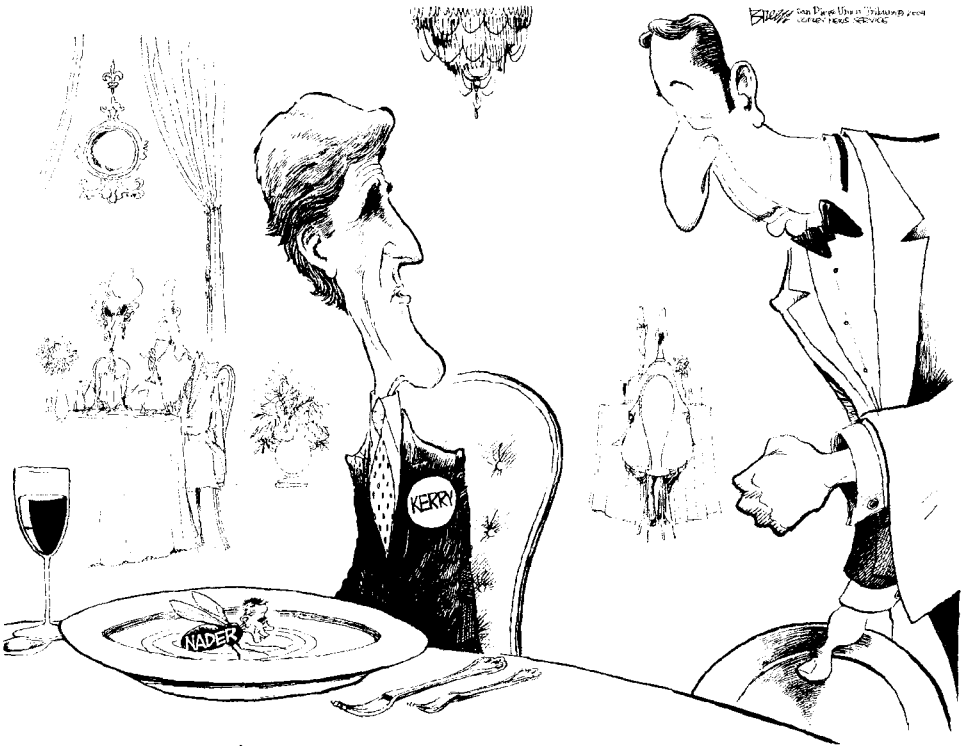

"WAITER, THERE'S A GADFLY IN MY CONSOMMÉ."

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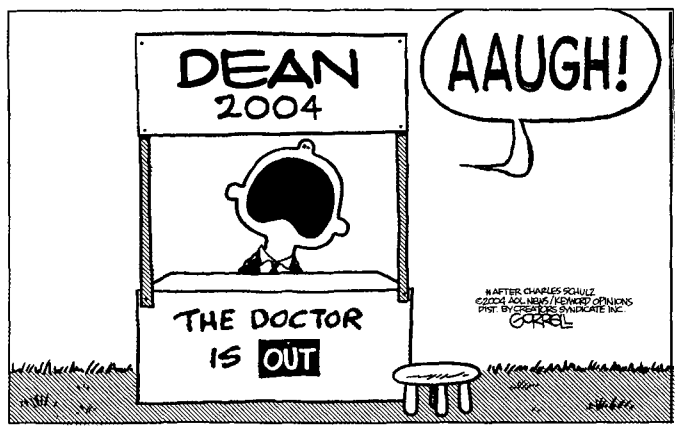
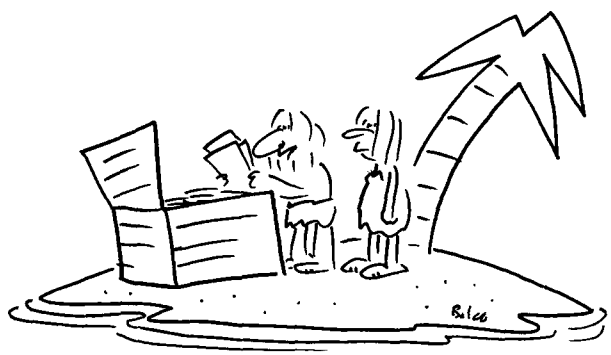
Holland Acts

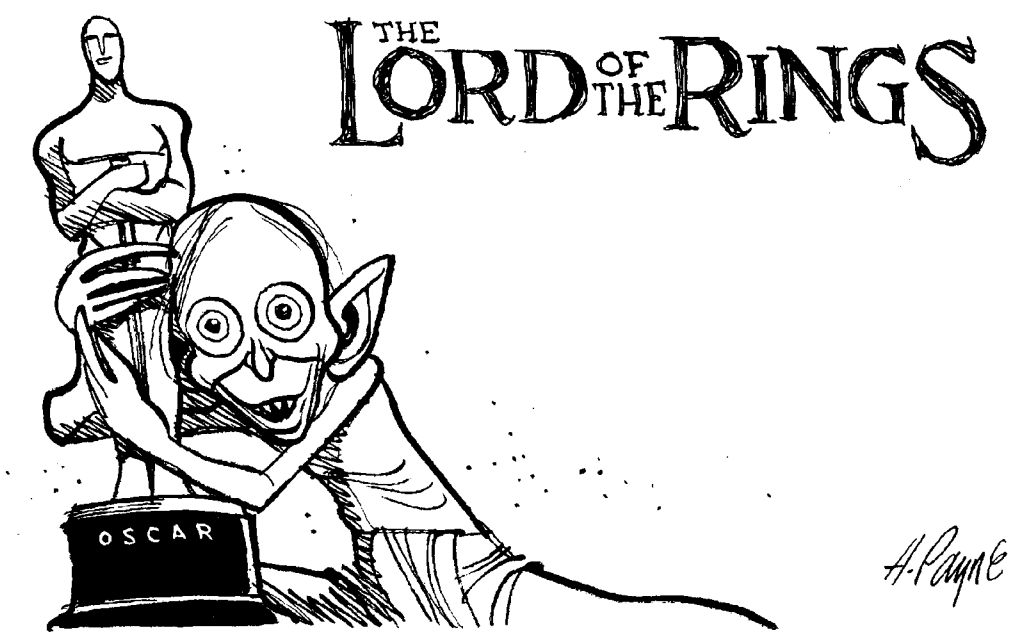
The Dutch have had it with the mosque,
The minaret and mobs
Of unemployed illegals; so,
Though some emitted sobs
(The Netherlands, you will recall,
Was tender toward Anne Frank),
They've sent twelve thousand packing just
Before Delft almost sank.

—W. H. von Dreele





"What?—Rose Law Firm billing records?"



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the long view

ROB LONG

"The Passion of the Christ"
Special Unitarian Edition™

FADE IN:

INT. SMALL CANDLELIT ROOM

It's the Last Supper. The Apostles are gathered around the table, with their spouses (and spouse-equivalents). Jesus sits at the center of the table, gazing wisely at his company.

JESUS
A simple meal, yes, but a fine one.
PETER
What's interesting is that the bread and the wine were both produced in a sustainable way.
JESUS
Really? I didn't know that.
ANDREW
We know a guy who produces all of his own stuff, totally organically. You should try his artisan cheeses.
JESUS
That would be nice. But I may not have time to do it. I don't have much time left to walk among you.
PETER
What? Why?
JESUS
One of you will betray me, one who is eating with me now.
ANDREW
What are you talking about? That's crazy!
JAMES
One of us? C'mon!
JESUS
Hey, don't shoot the messenger. I'm just sharing info, here.
JUDAS
Excuse me, I hate to interrupt, but I've been going over the bill, and did somebody order a separate entrée?
THOMAS
I did. I'm trying to cut down on carbs.
JUDAS
Well, then you should put in more money.
THOMAS
What?
JUDAS
There was a set menu that we all agreed on and you ordered à la carte. Basically, you owe.
THOMAS
Why do you always have to be so difficult?
JUDAS
Fine! Forget it, then! I'm never going to be the guy who figures out the bill again!
JESUS
Guys! Guys! Please. Look, Thomas, just render unto Judas your fair share of the bill okay? And Thomas, please, cut Judas some slack. He's clearly dealing with a lot of abuse issues from his childhood.

CUT TO:

INT. PONTIUS PILATE'S OFFICE—LATER THAT DAY

Jesus has been brought before Pilate.

PILATE
So, you are King of the Jews?
JESUS
I hate labels.
PILATE
Well, okay, but they say that you are King of the Jews.
JESUS
I'm really not into the whole "King" thing. It's like a power thing and it's toxic.
PILATE
Not following you.
JESUS
I'm just saying, hey, I'm a guy that some people believe is a certain thing and some people don't believe is a certain thing and it's up to you to, like, decide for yourself and stuff.
PILATE
This is a very irritating conversation.
JESUS
What. Ever.

FADE OUT.

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FADE IN:

INT. SMALL CANDLELIT ROOM

It's the Last Supper . . .

PETER
This wine is excellent. What is it?
JAMES
A Merlot.
PETER
Really? It seems too complex to be a Merlot.
JAMES
My wine guy says it might have some Cabernet Franc in it as well.
PETER
I was going to say . . .
THOMAS
It almost has a Southern Rhône quality. Maybe some Mourvedre in there?
PETER
I don't get the Mourvedre.
THOMAS
I'm tasting so many things here. Ripe berries. Leather. Wood smoke.
JAMES
I'm getting the wood smoke. Mmmmm.
JUDAS
What's this whole shebang going to set me back?
PETER
What?
JUDAS
Nice wine. But what's the damage here?
JAMES
Oh, I don't know.
PETER
I feel it's inappropriate to discuss money.
JUDAS
Did you guys pay full price for the wine? C'mon! You should have gone to my guy and gotten a discount!
JAMES
Judas, please. We're having a nice dinner here. Could you not be so . . . so . . .
JUDAS
So what?
JAMES
So . . . so . . .
PETER
So Jewish?
JUDAS
What are you talking about? We're all Jews here.
JAMES
I guess.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLGOTHA—LATER

It's the scene of the Crucifixion. FROM A DISTANCE we see a field of crosses. Mary the mother of James, and Mary Magdalene, look on sadly.

A centurion passes.

CENTURION
Who is that whom we just crucified?
MARY MAGDALENE
That was Jesus of Nazareth.
CENTURION
They say he is the Son of God. Is that true?
MARY MAGDALENE
Let's just say he is a fabulous guy. A terrific guy.
MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES
Really a superb person. One of my absolute favorites.
CENTURION
Are you weeping?
MARY MAGDALENE
Well, no. We're not into the tears and the wailing and the drama.
MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES
Too ethnic.

FADE OUT.

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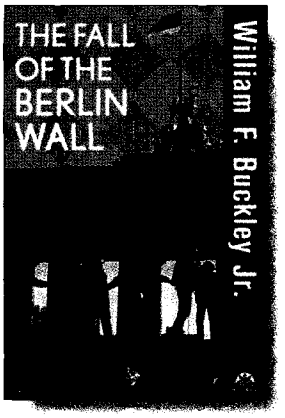
Tumbling Down



The Fall of the Berlin Wall, by William F. Buckley Jr. (Wiley, 224 pp., $19.95)

PETER ROBINSON

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR. was 19 at the time of the Yalta Conference, which ceded much of Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union, and 66 when the Soviet Union officially ceased to exist. Between those two points Buckley devoted himself to the cause of anti-Communism, ending up in what might as well have been a dead heat with Ronald Reagan for the rank of foremost Cold Warrior in the nation. Now Buckley has published a book that examines what was taking place inside the Evil Empire while he was busy containing it.

The Fall of the Berlin Wall is a very big little book. In fewer than 200 pages of text—it represents the newest entry in *Turning Points*, a series of brief works of history published by Wiley—it tells you everything about the Berlin Wall that there is to know. As it happens, that's a lot: Yalta, and the agreement to divide Berlin into four sectors, one each for the U.S., Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. The tens of thousands of East Germans who fled the Soviet sector for one of the Western sectors, escaping Communism—and bleeding East Germany of its work force. The 1961 decision by Walter Ulbricht and Nikita Khrushchev to erect a temporary barrier between the Soviet and Western sectors—and the tepid American response that emboldened them to make it permanent. The unending series of incidents the Wall provoked. The way the tall slabs of concrete came to symbolize the divide between East and West, Communist and free. The emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev. The cascade of events in 1989 that culminated in the dazed announcement—on live television, by a member of the East German politburo—that "permanent emigration is henceforth allowed across all border crossing points," which thousands of delirious Berliners celebrated by dancing atop the Wall itself. *The Fall of the Berlin Wall* presents every event.

Yet the book's principal achievement lies not in its comprehensiveness, but in the wonderfully deft way it presents its material: This is a small masterpiece of the narrative tradition. This tradition—the writing of history as if it were a story—began with Thucydides and survived every subsequent century until the last one, when academics spurned it, choosing to publish not narratives but raw material such as econometric studies and demographic data sets. History professors across America now pride themselves on producing books too boring to read. But *The Fall of the Berlin Wall* embraces all the virtues that keep readers turning the page.

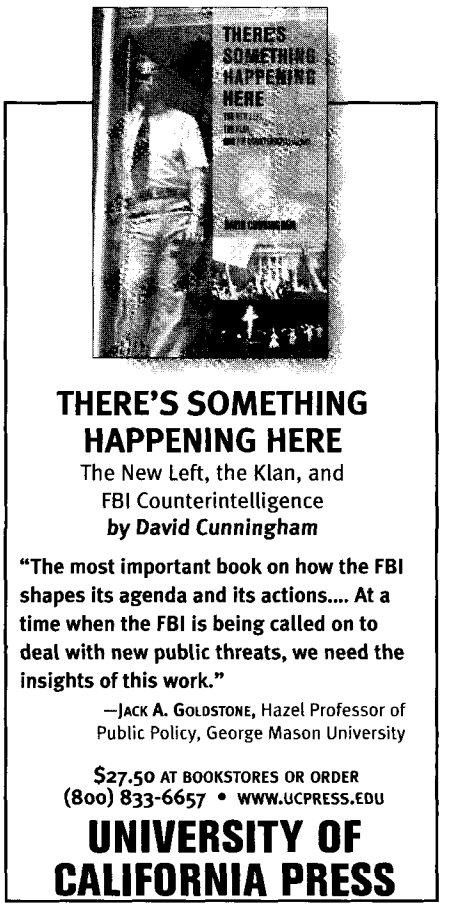
Recounting a visit he made to Checkpoint Charlie, for example, Buckley writes:

> The Vopos [East German police] stalled me for a full twenty minutes . . . a way of saying that although formal diplomatic concessions were being made, there was no reason for the visitor not to feel the heavy heel of the commanding entity, the German Democratic Republic. I don't conceal that I thought the Germans who were enforcing the laws appeared especially well qualified to do so, in the square-set resolution of their heads, the grimness of their expressions, and their disembodied attention to duty.

Exquisite diction and, in the mounting wave of dependent clauses that ends the second sentence, a use of rhythm that Macaulay would have approved.

The book's virtues likewise include a sense of accident and open-endedness—that at any number of points the story could have taken a different turn. Buckley suggests, for example, that when the Wall was first erected, East Berliners might have rioted—the authorities certainly feared that they would—prompting a bloodbath like the one that ended the 1953 workers' revolt. For that matter, Buckley suggests that the Western sectors of Berlin might have

Mr. Robinson is a fellow at the Hoover Institution and author of *How Ronald Reagan Changed My Life*. A former White House speechwriter, he wrote the address President Reagan delivered at the Berlin Wall.



THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING HERE
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fallen to the Communists soon after World War II. When Stalin imposed the 1948 blockade, Buckley writes, "what saved West Berlin was the U.S. airlift, and what made the airlift possible was . . . [a] 1920 decision to fold surrounding land into Greater Berlin," equipping what would become West Berlin with two airports and acreage on which American engineers would be able to construct a third. Had a single municipality not taken over some suburbs, in other words, world history would have been different. In the hands of a writer so alive to contingency, an account such as this becomes not a collection of data but a drama.

It is a drama that teems. Academics may write as if impersonal forces alone define history, but Buckley knows better. He gives us individuals: Macmillan, unflappable and urbane, who, as the Wall is being erected, demonstrates his refusal to take it seriously by proceeding from a grouse shoot in Yorkshire to golfing in Perthshire. Accosted by reporters on a golf course, Macmillan coolly says of the Wall, "Nobody is going to fight about it." Adenauer, stern and intense. As the Wall goes up Adenauer agonizes for days, hesitant to visit Berlin for fear that his presence might incite violence. Finally making a visit, he recognizes that his sense of timing has failed when he sees West Berliners carrying placards that read, "At last!" And of course East German strongman Walter Ulbricht, who erected the Wall.

> Whereas Lenin looked ruthless, Ulbricht looked disapproving. To see him standing at a lectern, shoulders squared, eyes narrowed behind steel-rimmed glasses, lips pursed above the goatee—you might take him for a solemn symphony conductor, prepared to bring down his baton to reprimand an erring violinist. You would not immediately guess that his favored means of registering displeasure were indeterminate jail sentences and, for star transgressors, the firing squad. A nonsmoker and nondrinker (except to toast the occasional victory of the Workers' and Peasants' State . . .) . . . [Ulbricht] was undeviating in doing his daily calisthenics and taking his daily run.

One of the tyrants of the 20th century, indelibly limned—and devastatingly disdained.

Buckley's portrait of Khrushchev is equally arresting. We tend to remember the Soviet premier as a crude peasant, blustering "We will bury you" or pounding his shoe on a table at the U.N. Drawing on materials that have become available since the demise of the USSR, Buckley presents a Khrushchev who is not just crude but wily and—the real surprise—circumspect. Responding to Ulbricht's proposal for sealing off the Western sectors of Berlin, Khrushchev imposed strict conditions. First he refused to permit Ulbricht to interfere with air traffic. Then he agreed to a wall only if it were composed at first of barbed wire. If the Allies responded to the barbed-wire barriers with force, the man Buckley terms "Khrushchev the Cautious" insisted, Ulbricht's troops were to fall back.

This is a drama that teems. Academics may write as if impersonal forces define history, but Buckley knows better. He gives us individuals.

Which brings us to Buckley's portrait of John Kennedy. It is remarkably generous. At least it is remarkably generous considering what it might have been. In his inaugural address, after all, Kennedy proclaimed his intention to "bear any burden [and] oppose any foe," then spent his first months in office seeming to shrink from both. In his third month he called off air support for the Bay of Pigs invasion. In his fifth month he traipsed into Vienna for a summit meeting with no better plan than to offer Khrushchev a pat little lecture on the dangers of "miscalculation." When Khrushchev erupted, denouncing Kennedy for insulting him, our 35th chief executive simply listened, dazed, as Khrushchev abused him. Kennedy could hardly have improved upon that act if he had *wanted* Khrushchev to miscalculate American resolve. Then, in his seventh month, Kennedy faced the crisis in Berlin.

Kennedy seems to have contemplated forcing the East Germans to dismantle the structure, sending to Berlin General Lucius Clay, who 13 years earlier had faced down Stalin by organizing the airlift. Yet only a few months after the first barbed-wire barriers appeared, Kennedy had our ambassador to Moscow, Llewellyn Thompson, inform the Soviets that the U.S. accepted the Berlin Wall as "a fact of international life." The torch may have been passed to a new generation, but Kennedy demonstrated no eagerness to hold it aloft.

In presenting this material, Buckley refuses to adopt a censorious tone toward Kennedy like the tone I just employed. He is too aware of all that the young president faced—the clashing views and personalities of his advisers, the incomplete information he was receiving from Berlin, the strain of coordinating policy with allies as disparate as Macmillan, Adenauer, and de Gaulle, the burden of weighing nuclear possibilities. If Kennedy had indeed chosen to respond with force, what then? Deep inside East Germany, West Berlin would have proven all but indefensible. For that matter, what would have happened if the U.S. had forced the East Germans to remove the Wall? Before the border was sealed, more than 12,000 East Germans a month had been presenting themselves in West Berlin for asylum. Khrushchev may have proven cautious, but how long could he once again have countenanced such a torrent of refugees? Sometimes implicitly, but often enough explicitly, Buckley poses just these questions, putting the reader in Kennedy's place. The portrait that emerges? That of a young man, charged with solemn responsibilities, who did the best that he could—and even, arguably, the best that could have been done.

The dominant virtue of this book? Moral clarity. Many a tenured historian would rather write a dozen unreadable tomes than make a single "value judgment," but Buckley thrives on such judgments. He presents the Berlin Wall as exactly what it was, a manifestation of evil. "When all the world is surfaced over in concrete," Buckley writes, "one day a blade of grass will sprout up. This happened in Berlin on November 9, 1989." **NR**

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To the Bitter End

Alger Hiss's Looking-Glass Wars: The Covert Life of a Soviet Spy, by G. Edward White (Oxford, 320 pp., $30)

RONALD RADOSH

Except for a dwindling group—mostly *Nation* magazine readers and editors—the zeitgeist has changed concerning Alger Hiss. Beginning with Allen Weinstein's *Perjury* (1978), and continuing with Sam Tanenhaus's *Whittaker Chambers* (1997) and the decoded Soviet Venona documents, the consensus has solidified: Hiss was undoubtedly a Soviet spy. One might therefore wonder why another book is necessary. The answer is provided by G. Edward White, a law professor at Virginia. What White offers is even more of a surprise when we consider that his late father-in-law was John F. Davis, a member of Hiss's legal team from 1948 to 1950 who maintained a lifelong belief in Hiss's innocence.

What White accomplishes in this innovative and brilliant new book is *not* yet another attempt to show Hiss's guilt, but rather an examination of how Hiss was both a gifted Soviet agent and "a successful publicizer of his innocence," able to convince so many people. Why, White asks, was Hiss seen as a sympathetic figure by so many who should have known better—and why did they ignore irrefutable evidence to go on believing him?

White starts from the premise that Hiss was both a dedicated Communist party member and an agent of Soviet military intelligence from 1934 to 1946. Why did he lie about this so blatantly, for so long, and even enlist friends and family in the lie? He had other options. He could—as his wife desired—have faded into the woodwork and led a private life. He could have admitted his guilt and sought to excuse his actions for "idealistic" reasons that he thought at the time justified betrayal of his own country—the rationale used today by so many left-wing historians who exonerate the Rosenbergs.

Instead, Hiss pursued a consistent path of categorically dissociating himself from the slightest connection with Communism, developing what White calls a false "narrative" that he would relate for the rest of his life. He was, he claimed, simply a loyal New Dealer and devotee of international peace: a man who was therefore accused by the New Deal's right-wing enemies for their own partisan purposes. He made those who

Mr. Radosh, adjunct senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, is co-author of *The Rosenberg File* and, with Allis Radosh, the forthcoming *Red Star over Hollywood: The Film Colony's Romance with the Left.*

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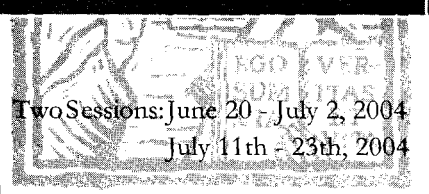

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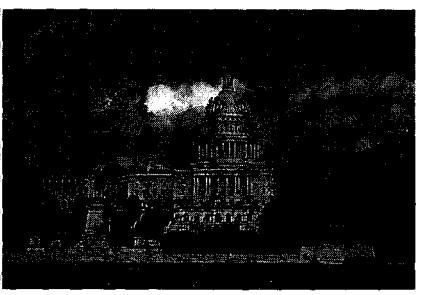

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And now we are *very* happy to announce that *NR* founder and Editor-at-large **William F. Buckley Jr.,** as well as **Ramesh Ponnuru**—*NR*'s intelligent, opinionated, and provacative Senior Editor—will be joining us (we're still awaiting replies from other speakers who we've invited) for seven luxurious days of political shop-talk, conservative revelry, and world-class cruising.

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This will be *NR*'s second trip to **Bermuda,** and we're happy to be returning to this beautiful island. It never gets old: Sauntering through these charming cities of **Hamilton** and **St. George** (still steeped, like the customary afternoon tea, in the traditions of British colonial life) during the day, enjoying the nightlife, relaxing on the rose-blushed sands of Bermuda's gorgeous beaches—all of this and much more (like the numerous excellent excursions Radisson will provide) awaits you. Oh yes: The *Navigator* will *also* make a lengthy visit to **Norfolk,** from which fascinating tours to Colonial Williamsburg Jamestown, Yorktown, and other historic Virginia landmarks are available.

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DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
Wed./May 12	New York City		5:00PM	
Thur./May 13	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
Fri../May 14	Hamilton	8:00 AM		afternoon seminar late-night smoker
Sat./May 15	Hamilton	Overnight		afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Sun./May 16	St. George	7:00AM	4:00PM	
Mon./May 17	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars late-night smoker
Tues./May 18	Norfolk	7:00AM	5:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Wed./May 19	New York City	8:00AM		

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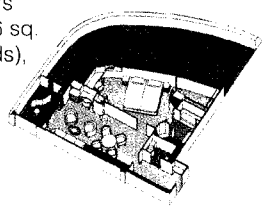
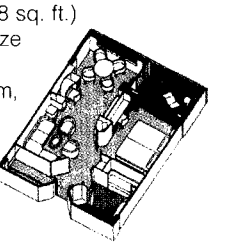
MASTER SUITE Supreme luxury quarters (1,067 sq. ft.) feature private verandah (106 sq. ft.), king-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), whirlpool bath/shower, floor-to-ceiling windows, dressing room, large sitting area, VCR, mini-bar, refrigerator, butler service, walk-in closets, and much more.



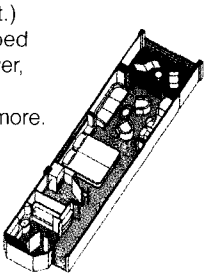
Category MS
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 9,499 P/P

NAVIGATOR SUITE Grand stateroom (448 sq. ft.) features private verandah (47 sq. ft.), king-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, dressing room, VCR, mini-bar, refrigerator, butler service, walk-in closet, floor-to-ceiling windows.



Category NS
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 6,999 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 12,999

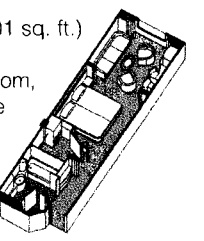
BALCONY SUITES Spacious room (301 sq. ft.) features private verandah (55 sq. ft.), king-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), whirlpool bath/shower, dressing room, large sitting area, VCR, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, and much more. "Penthouse" level has Butler Service.



Category B "Penthouse"
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,799 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 7,499

Category D (no butler service)
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,399 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 5,499

WINDOW SUITE Large and comfortable (301 sq. ft.) features king-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, sitting area, dressing room, VCR, mini-bar, refrigerator, walk-in closet, large ocean-view windows.



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DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,999 P/P
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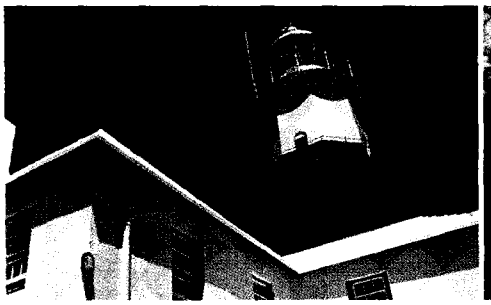
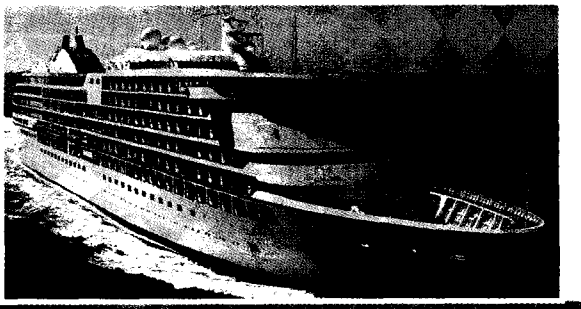
Aside from the fine dining, the spectacular seminars we're planning, and the numerous tours and excursions, there's so much else one can do on the *Navigator*. With one of the highest space-per-guest ratios at sea, there's *plenty* of room for many pleasurable pastimes (don't forget lounging on a deck chair!). On board you'll find a world-class spa, fitness center, and salon, duty-free boutiques, intimate bars and lounges, a swimming pool and whirlpools, golf driving cages where you may practice your swing, a well-stocked library with a computer center (so you can receive or send e-mail or browse the Internet), an elegant card room, and more. There's "High Tea" every afternoon and other happy diversions (art auctions and ballroom dance classes), and at night, ah . . . you'll abandon any thoughts of going to bed at a sensible hour. There are dazzling live performances in the Seven Seas Lounge, thrilling games of chance at the casino, romantic cabaret acts, plus dancing until you say when.

Be part of this fabulous seven-day experience: Join **Bill Bennett** (who'll be discussing the *kulturkampf* and more), **James Woolsey** (who can give a more informed take on the war against terrorism than the former head of the CIA?!), and *NR* editors **William F. Buckley Jr., Rich Lowry, John O'Sullivan, Jay Nordlinger,** and **Ramesh Ponnuru** (and other top speakers we've invited) for a delightful week aboard the *Navigator*. Reserve your cabin: simply fill out and return the application form on the next page (you can also book right away at **www.nationalreviewcruise-bermuda.com**). The *Navigator* holds but 490 passengers, and cabins (already 60 have been reserved by *NR* readers!) are selling out quickly. Don't let yourself get shut out of what will be a true once-in-a-lifetime experience. Don't miss the ***National Review* 2004 Bermuda Cruise.**





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accused him into liars and himself into their unwilling victim. Hiss's chosen narrative was nothing but a spy's cover story, repeated ad infinitum until many opinion makers chose to believe him.

His story necessitated adopting the pose of an outraged innocent, a man falsely accused by Chambers, whom Hiss portrayed as mentally unstable. From his youngest years, Hiss had had an aptitude for ingratiating himself with others, manipulating them single-mindedly until he achieved his goals. What Soviet espionage gave Hiss was the ability to use these techniques on behalf of a larger cause—the dream of serving the new Communist utopia while obtaining the new sense of power that went along with a secret and controlled life.

The key Hiss adopted to convince others of his lies was what White terms the "reputational defense," using distinguished Establishment figures as character witnesses. His genius was to manipulate opinion so skillfully that each time incontrovertible evidence of his guilt emerged, he could turn the tables and produce worthies who would swear to his innocence.

As White shows, there were many moments at which Hiss could have switched tactics. He could have admitted knowing Chambers, which would have made it easier for Chambers not to sue him for libel; Chambers, after all, had at first not testified to Hiss's espionage, only to his Communist affiliations. Yet Hiss obstinately used the risky tactic of outright denial. He claimed that the Woodstock typewriter on which he had typed State Department documents was newly manufactured by the FBI; the tactic backfired when the jury was convinced that the typewriter proved Hiss's guilt. "Instead of appearing as a person whose innocence was the natural inference of his integrity," White writes, "Hiss appeared as someone who was doggedly trying to keep others from learning about his secret past."

In prison, Hiss kept up the pretense. Not only did he spend hours helping illiterate Mafia prisoners learn to read, he never complained about any unfair treatment he may have received from prison authorities. Not only did he maintain his innocence if asked, he shrewdly avoided other "political" prisoners on the left, and assumed the persona of a regular guy—further convincing those who wanted to believe that he could not have been a spy. He became the quintessential "good con": a man who came to be revered by the worst of the prisoners.

Hiss had a fanatical dedication to vindicating his reputation. One of the major themes of White's psychological portrait is of how Hiss brought his son Tony, who had been estranged from him since childhood, into active participation in his fraudulent effort. He mended his fences with Tony in adulthood, and gained a family member who would carry on the effort to vindicate him even after his death. In effect, he betrayed the trust of loyal friends and family members, including his own son, to pursue the goal of helping the Soviet Union.

What helped Hiss was the changing moral and political climate. When he was imprisoned, most Americans undoubtedly believed in his guilt. But he maintained his charade long enough for the 1960s and Vietnam to come along and produce a new national climate, one in which many Americans came to believe the worst about their government—that, for example, the Justice Department and FBI would fabricate evidence to convict an innocent person. This skeptical climate enabled Hiss to gain near-vindication, as White puts it, "without his producing a shred of credible new evidence." His tale of partisan right-wingers and government officials orchestrating a frame-up won him fresh supporters among the emerging New Left.

Even Allen Weinstein's powerful indictment proved less than fatal to the Hiss steamroller. Weinstein's critics, White shows, managed to cast doubt on his scholarship by exaggerating the importance of some minor errors in his account, and to use those to allow Hiss to persevere. Hiss never had any solid legal defenses; he merely used the new anti-anti-Communism to convince many of his victim status.

Hiss, White concludes, was the perfect secret agent, a man who could easily lead a compartmentalized life. He was self-assured and possessed a fanatical devotion to his goals. By denying his secret life, he could simultaneously demonstrate his loyalty to his Soviet controls and his loyalty to those who continued the fight to prove his innocence. He was not an ambiguous figure, White stresses, but "the consummate spy." Hiss acted in a manner that allowed him to inspire his gullible supporters, and to provide a living example of how American Cold War policy led to injustice. All the while, he stayed loyal to the Soviets and their goals. It is the achievement of G. Edward White to have provided the final unmasking of Alger Hiss, and, one hopes, put an end once and for all to the campaign waged on the traitor's behalf. **NR**

WORKS

It puzzled me right from the start:
Things are always what they seem
Not what I'm told they are.

Damned are they, I'm told,
But see these magnificent works!
How can such changing, whirling,
Sparkling things ever turn to mold?

Queen of Sheba, brave Mamluk,
Sinan, Churchill, Twain,
One man, I'm told, has even seen
Heaven—I read it in a book.

Builders, writers, movers, shakers
Verses, oeuvres, façades
Taken together, added all up
Overwhelmed even my calculator.

(That toy was yet another source of rapture
So sleek and black and powerful
A cleverer than clever contraption.)

Then late one day I took up a book, frayed
And filmy with dust. Eyes wide open,
Stunned I looked, body turned to rust,
The cover seemed to say: "Today, *mon frère*, today—"

You can call it comeuppance. I called it faith.

—SARAH BRAMWELL

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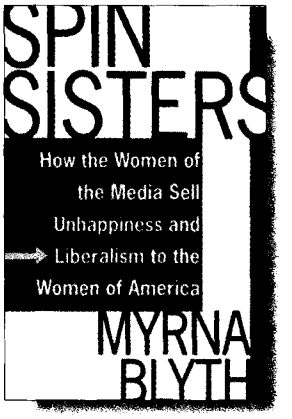
Blyth Spirit

Spin Sisters: How the Women of the Media Sell Unhappiness—and Liberalism—to the Women of America, by Myrna Blyth (St. Martin's, 352 pp., $24.95)

KATE O'BEIRNE

EVERY month, 50 million women read women's magazines that serve up a steady diet of left-wing politics sandwiched between ads for products that promise to make their beleaguered audience hipper, happier, and hassle-free. As editor-in-chief of *Ladies' Home Journal* for over 20 years, Myrna Blyth was a sibling in good standing of the smug spin sisters whose glossy pages relentlessly peddle dissatisfaction and Democratic drivel to American women. In this terrific tell-all book, Blyth has left the clique of the powerful popular girls to tell the rest of us that they are as manipulative, incestuous, and condescending as we might have expected.

While male editors, writers, and readers might be tempted to dismiss the impact of a women's-media empire seemingly more concerned about weight control than weighty issues, the women's magazines—a $7 billion business—have enviable clout. Of the ten largest and most profitable magazines in America, five are edited specifically for women (the other five have large female audiences).



In addition to strollers, spas, and the latest shoes, these magazines promote an idea: modern feminism in all its fragile self-centeredness. With the conviction that "stress sells," the spin sisters wildly exaggerate the pressures of daily life owing to the unreasonable demands of work and family—and they hysterically warn of the dangers lurking in everything from manicures and mattresses to mold and mercury. Stress sells self-indulgence, which keeps the advertisers happy; and what the $470 million aromatherapy market can't fix is up to the government to handle.

The magazines tend to ignore common problems that can't be solved by a hot scented bath, and simultaneously to hype exotic dangers. Why try to give sensible advice on family budgets, for example, when advertisers want women to spend, spend, spend—and alarming cover stories sell, sell, sell? A sampling from *Glamour* magazine includes "Stalked! Why No Woman Is Safe" and "He's Going to Kill Me. Is Anybody Listening?" One issue highlighting "The Gunning Down of American Women" noted that "lawmakers seem to do little about it" and included a

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story about a woman being harassed by a police officer. The message, Blyth dryly observes, is that "if the robbers don't get you, the cops probably will."

Many women complain that our lot is unfair because we have no time for ourselves; but in fact, the average woman watches nearly five hours of TV a day, much of it programmed for her sex. And on the TV shows she watches, the message of female helplessness and hazard resonates: Women are depicted either as victims of cheating, abusive men or as implausibly plucky heroines who triumph despite unrelenting male hostility.

From her start as an ingenue writer at *Ingenue* magazine in the early 1960s, through stints at *Redbook* and *Family Circle*, Blyth experienced the metamorphosis of women's magazines. Not so long ago, they celebrated the capability, smarts, and refinement of American women; now, says Blyth, "pregnant actresses pranc[e] across the covers of national magazines." It's startling to be reminded that back when *"Ladies'" Home Journal* meant it, Marilyn Monroe, the most sensational celebrity of her day, was never featured in a traditional women's magazine. Today, female editors will pay any price (literally) and bear the burden of outrageous, self-involved demands to land a generally vapid (and always airbrushed) spoiled celebrity on their covers.

In addition to the analysis, Blyth does some dishing in the book. She reports, for example, that Barbara Walters courted Monica Lewinsky's lawyer in "dozens of demeaning ways"—including flying to Washington to hand-deliver a box of bran flakes. It was William Ginsberg's favorite lunch, and wasn't served after noon at his hotel.

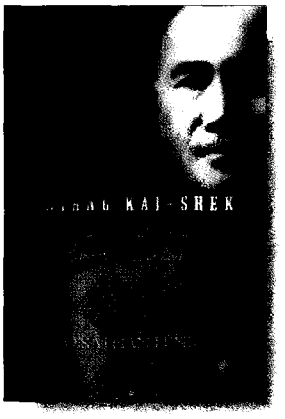
Barbara herself lunches at Michael's, the tony midtown Manhattan restaurant where the media divas dine. Blyth invites us to join them on a typical afternoon. There's "Her Cuteness" Katie Couric, the self-described "typical frazzled working mom" nibbling her salad like a rabbit before hopping off to see her personal trainer, whose fees are rumored to start at $7,500 a week. Diane Sawyer, "the high priestess of the hidden camera," shares lunch and feminist opinions with some less recognizable spin sisters, including Jane Chestnut, editor of *Woman's Day*, who's overheard calling President Bush an "idiot." Blyth explains that these reigning queens of TV and print are joined at their trim hips politically, socially, and professionally in an insular, coastal world. She quotes an advertising expert who explains that the marketers who pay the bills share this disdain for the "empty" space between the East and West coasts.

Blyth is a happily married mother with two sons whose own humor and common sense caused her misgivings about the sour message and sloppy methods of women's journalism during the years she was a top editor. Although she makes clear that she is a penitent defector from the ranks of the spin/stress/sob sisters, a 1997 Media Research Center study named her own *Ladies' Home Journal* the most "politically balanced" of the women's magazines. She recounts the stunned reactions she got from her fellow editors when she ventured to point out that their monolithic view of American women might be incorrect. Women editors and producers behave as if women's opinions were uniformly in accord with their own liberal views, despite the demonstrable differences among women on virtually every issue, from abortion and gay rights to the Iraq war. You won't learn from a women's magazine, for example, that the majority of women support the death penalty or that one in four women owns a gun. Blyth jokingly points out that half of American women drive a minivan, the other half an SUV, to the supermarket to buy women's magazines that consistently cite the environment as a "hot button" issue for women.

Blyth hardly needs to explain that no one says grace at Michael's. Polls indicate that 65 percent of American women pray daily, even as her former colleagues view religious women as "a small, slightly wacky minority." The me-centered "spirituality" of the elite involves little more than strolling in the woods and lighting $65 Jo Malone candles; prayer and confession are good only for the soul, but scented wax is pleasing to the advertisers.

Myrna Blyth's entertaining takedown of the spin sisterhood reflects her proven success in understanding how to engage and inform women readers. Unlike her former siblings, she is writing for an audience whose values, resilience, and intelligence she respects. **NR**

Shrewd, But Small



Chiang Kai-Shek: China's Generalissimo and the Nation He Lost, by Jonathan Fenby (Carroll & Graf, 736 pp., $30)

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

I THINK Chiang Kai Shek's career is well known, at least in outline. The last Chinese emperor abdicated in 1912. China fell into utter chaos until, in 1926, Chiang marched an army northward and achieved a semblance of national unification. From 1928 China was under Chiang's dictatorship, with Nanking as the capital. However, Japan seized Manchuria in 1931. Four years later, Chiang's grand effort to stamp out the Chinese Communist party failed when Mao Tse-tung took his followers on the Long March to a remote region. In 1937 the Japanese invaded metropolitan China in force and a general war commenced, with the U.S. joining in on China's side after Pearl Harbor. Chiang and Mao maintained a wary alliance until Japan's defeat. Then there was civil war. The Communists won, establishing the People's Republic in 1949. Chiang fled to Taiwan, where he maintained an authoritarian dictatorship until his death in 1975.

The conventional wisdom, naturally much encouraged by the Communists and their Western shills, is that Chiang lost China because he was inflexibly incompetent, cared nothing for the common people, and alienated his U.S. ally by permitting

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his wife's family to loot the country for their own enrichment. One of the things one hopes to learn from a book about Chiang is the degree to which this conventional wisdom is correct. Jonathan Fenby's new biography leaves one believing that it is, with some minor qualifications. To borrow a rhetorical figure from Orwell: Some things are true even though the Chinese Communist party says they are true.

In fact, once civil-war passions had cooled, the Communists adopted a more generous line towards Chiang. When he died in 1975, they offered to make a suitable burial plot available for him in his home district. (The offer was refused.) The traditional attitude of the Chinese to failed political enterprises is: "If you win, you're the Emperor; if you lose, you're a bandit." This at least has a certain moral neutrality about it, and leaves scope for magnanimity, so long as the failed enterprise can be shown to have had some patriotic color. Chiang's undoubtedly did. Fenby shows us that Chiang was, from his earliest years, motivated mainly by patriotism, though it was a patriotism refracted through his own narrow mind and stunted, unattractive personality.

Yet Chiang's greatest enemy was neither Japan nor Mao, but China herself. It requires an effort of imagination for an American of today to grasp the sheer *backwardness* of China in the period Fenby is writing about, the first half of the 20th century. China was, to be sure, a great civilization, with a glittering literary tradition stretching back continuously to the Bronze Age, respectable accomplishments in pre-industrial science and technology, and a great body of religious and philosophical writing. In matters social, political, and economic, however, China was medieval. Reading Fenby's book, time and again one feels oneself to be not in the modern world at all, but in the Scotland of Macbeth, the Germany of Otto the Great, or the England of the early Plantagenets. Listen:

> Though the small, delicate, ruthless governor [of Yunnan Province] had rallied to the Kuomintang cause in name, his revenues from opium and slave-labor tin mines made him anything but a model ally for the national revolution. . . . He had invited a rebellious general with whom he had reached a peace agreement to a luncheon banquet in a tent. At the end of the meal, a swordsman behind the guest chopped off his head, which was then hung from a telegraph pole at the entry to the capital . . .

It did not help that Chiang himself was distinctly a product of that very backwardness. His governing style was imperial-Confucian: "Tremble and obey!" He could not be bothered much with consultation, and resented disagreement. By Fenby's account, he was not such a military duffer as I had previously supposed, though if the old adage that "amateurs think strategy, professionals think logistics" is true, he was definitely a military amateur. In economics he was a perfect blank, and only got as far as he did by leaving decisions in this sphere to the brilliant T. V. Soong. When Soong resigned in 1933, to be replaced by the comparatively clueless H. H. Kung, China's economy soon began to unravel.

On Chiang's key American allies, Fenby leaves one with the impression that British General Sir Alan Brooke's summaries, which he quotes, were not far off the mark. Joseph Stilwell, said Sir Alan, was "a hopeless crank with no vision," while Claire Chennault was "a very gallant airman with limited brain." Sir Alan's verdict on Chiang himself was: "a shrewd but small man . . . very successful at leading the Americans down the garden path."

Chiang's great asset in those garden-path excursions was his third wife, née Soong Mei-ling, who died last October at the age of 105. Mei-ling was famously charming. She charmed the socks off many persons of great intelligence and perspicacity. (Most notable among the uncharmed: Franklin D. Roosevelt.) Her charm must, though, have been of the kind that transmits itself only by chemical emanations, because it does not come through in any of the written accounts I have read—of which Fenby's is at least the twentieth. Though plainly a very intelligent woman, and possessed of an icy kind of prettiness, Mei-ling was also calculating, manipulative, vindictive, a hypochondriac, and a crashing snob.

On the much-debated question of whether the Missimo and the Generalissimo ever performed the conjugal act together, Fenby's account of the marriage reinforced my impression that they probably did not, though it is unlikely we shall ever know for sure. The only woman who ever owned a piece of Chiang's stony heart—other than his mother, whom he worshipped—was the hapless Jennie Chen, whom he married in 1921, when he was 34 and she 15. Chiang sent Jennie away in 1927 so that he could contract his power-marriage with Mei-ling, and thereafter relieved himself with concubines. In old age Jennie wrote her memoirs. They seem truthful, are more even-handed than one would expect, and do not contradict known facts on any important point. Fenby has used them to good effect in his description of the young Chiang. The future Generalissimo courted Jennie very passionately, by her account; though he rather spoiled the effect by bringing a nasty case of gonorrhea to the marriage bed. Either the disease or the treatments left both of them sterile. Chiang had no children by either Jennie or Mei-ling; his son Ching-kuo was the issue of a traditional arranged marriage when Chiang was fourteen.

Fenby's researches have been prodigious, his writing is fluent and engaging, and his judgments seem to me uniformly sensible. This is much the best account of Chiang's career that I have read. The book is well planned, with breaks in the narrative to discuss key points—a detailed comparison of Chiang's personality and style with Mao's, for instance. The only fault I can find is that Fenby stops his story in 1949, with nothing about Chiang's 26-year dictatorship over the unfortunate people of Taiwan. That is, however, excusable, as Chiang's defeat on the mainland rendered him little more than a historical footnote. Whether he really deserves anything better from posterity is discussed by Fenby in a thoughtful epilogue. This is a fine book, a splendid achievement, an engrossing narrative, and a valuable work of reference. **NR**

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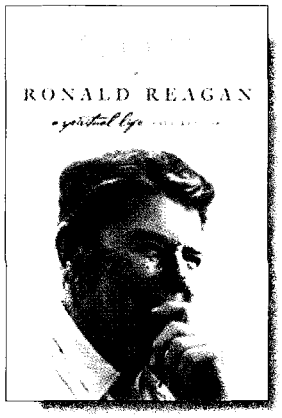

God and Ronald Reagan: A Spiritual Life, by Paul Kengor (ReganBooks, 416 pp., $26.95)

S. T. KARNICK

AMERICANS have always been apprehensive about mixing politics and religion. It seems that we want our politicians to be religious, and specifically Christian, but not overbearing about it. Hence we view their spiritual lives with great suspicion, questioning either their sincerity or their independence.

This was particularly true for Ronald Reagan. "While he was president," political scientist Paul Kengor notes in this new "spiritual biography," "Reagan's religious faith was, at best, dismissed or ridiculed." But as Kengor establishes convincingly, the criticisms were dead wrong: Reagan's belief in God "was a key source of his optimism and boldness, his daring and self-security, and his confidence; these essential intangibles carried him throughout his presidency—and career as a whole—and enabled him to achieve what he did."

Kengor's analysis of Reagan's upbringing is particularly useful in understanding his spiritual life. Reagan's father, an apathetic Catholic, left his sons' religious education to their mother, Nelle, the most active member of the local Disciples of Christ evangelical church. The indefatigable Nelle gave religious readings, appeared in dramas, taught Sunday school, led discussions and prayer meetings, and aided the ill and the destitute. Neighbors considered her prayers to be so powerful that many believed she had the gift of supernatural healing.

Her son Ron became similarly active in the church and in prayer; many congregation members were convinced he was bound for the ministry. The family had changed residences frequently during his early years, however, and Reagan became something of a loner even in his relationship with God. During his early Hollywood years, he seems not to have attended services very regularly, but Kengor quotes numerous people as being impressed by Reagan's religious convictions at that time.

The author effectively disposes of the claims that Reagan was a devotee of astrology, and he very carefully explains Reagan's "religious truancy"—his puzzling lack of church attendance while serving as president—by arguing that he was sincerely reluctant to distract congregations with a celebrity's presence and large, intrusive security detail.

Certainly, prayer was central to Reagan's life. He prayed often, both in public and in private. At the end of his acceptance speech at the 1980 Republican convention he said, apparently extemporaneously, "I'll confess that I've been a little afraid to suggest what I'm going to suggest—I'm more afraid not to: that we begin our crusade joined together in a moment of silent prayer." I still remember watching it on television and being impressed by his obvious sincerity.

Religious imagery and ideas were conspicuous in all of Reagan's most important speeches, including the famous nationally televised address on behalf of Barry Goldwater in 1964, in which Reagan mentioned Moses and Israel and invoked the image of Christ on the cross. In speeches, conversations, and personal letters, Reagan showed great command of sophisticated arguments by such theologians as C. S. Lewis.

Kengor establishes that Reagan saw the presidency as a bully pulpit from which to promote a national religious renewal. In a 1983 interview, Reagan said, "What I have felt for a long time is that the people in this country were hungry for what you might call a spiritual revival. . . . I decided that if it was possible for me to help in that revival, I wanted to do that." The author notes that Reagan often altered specific passages of proposed speeches "to conform to his beliefs about the divinity of Christ," and invoked Christ before secular audiences. "Such comments," Kengor points out, "weren't mere public attempts to appeal to religious conservative voters. In fact, they appear more often in Reagan's private letters to everyday citizens than in his public speeches."

As president, Reagan advanced some issues of concern to religious believers—arguing for prayer in public schools and against abortion on demand—but nothing changed in those areas. He did have success in applying his religious principles to economic matters, however, and he spoke out frequently against racial and religious prejudice (though he received little credit for this).

Of course, the greatest historical effect of Reagan's religious beliefs was his relentless and ultimately effective opposition to Communism, which he detested especially for its Marxist godlessness. Kengor makes that battle central to his book. "During nearly every week of his presidency," he notes, "Reagan blasted the USSR for its anti-religious stance." The president kept the heat on the Soviets, most famously during his "Evil Empire" speech, and particularly on Gorbachev, whom he strongly suspected of being a "closet Christian." "Hard-line Soviet Communists," Kengor writes, "were perturbed by Reagan's constant 'God talk.'" This effort came at exactly the right time and had a tremendous effect. "Under Mikhail Gorbachev," Kengor notes, "religious faith in the USSR began to flourish."

Reagan saw all of this as part of a divine plan for America, and he characterized himself simply as "an instrument of God," deflecting credit for the achievements of his administration. Longtime associate William Clark describes him in the book as "an amazingly humble person. True humility. There was no pride there at all."

We Americans are undoubtedly right to be suspicious of politicians' religious claims, but in Reagan's case, as this book shows, there was more spiritual strength there than many of us thought: His faith in God helped propel events that truly changed the world for the better. Let's see Karl Marx explain that. **NR**

Mr. Karnick is editor in chief of *American Outlook* magazine, published by the Hudson Institute.

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■ SHELF LIFE ■

Pure Simon

MICHAEL POTEMRA

A WHOLE generation of conservatives grew up reading William Simon's eloquent political tomes, *A Time for Truth* and *A Time for Action*. Now, four years after Simon's death, comes the capstone to his lifelong advocacy for freedom. *A Time for Reflection: An Autobiography* (Regnery, 352 pp., $27.95), written by Simon with John M. Caher, is a memoir quite remarkable in its emotional candor. Simon reflects, for example, on the devastating loss of his mother when he was just eight years old, and she 34; and all the raw, wounded pride of boyhood throbs in his remarks about some adult friends of his family: "My father's card-playing buddies treated me as a plain, ordinary, commonplace kid destined for mediocrity, or less. I suppose they expected that I would spend my life as a clerk . . . I was offended by their presumptuousness and arrogance. After all, these were men who inherited their money (or married rich) and spent their days in idle pursuits; they were not producers. [These] men who presumed to pigeonhole Billy Simon . . . "

That sounds like a flesh-and-blood person talking; and—coming, as it does, on page 6—it prepares the reader for what turns out to be a warmly personal book. It even includes convention hijinks: dozens of clucking chickens delivered to a hotel room, as well as "a dead barracuda protruding from the toilet, wearing a bowler and a bow tie." The public Simon also appears in these pages, but just as charmingly. We squirm right along with him, for example, when President Nixon introduces him to the cabinet as the new energy czar, with a clumsy analogy only the legendary Trickster could have thought appropriate. As Simon recounts: "The president told the cabinet that if Hitler had not given [Albert] Speer the power to override the German bureaucracy, the Nazis would have been defeated far earlier, and indicated I would have comparable power."

Simon distinguished himself in public service as a man of principle, and wins points for political as well as personal honesty. An example: "The shah, in my opinion, was not only an uninformed, misinformed, irrational megalomaniac given to hallucinating, he was also duplicitous." He also tells of a tense encounter with then-vice president Nelson Rockefeller: "Rockefeller, who had been drinking, was acting bizarrely, even for him. At one point, he . . . grabbed me by the lapel and threatened [me] . . . I [answered] his threat with an insult . . . I was simply trying to irritate Nelson to the point where he would either hit me, and give me an excuse to flatten him, or, preferably, just go away. He backed off, and went looking for someone else to bully."

Another political nugget: Simon discloses that, in 1976, a dying Hubert Humphrey told him that he believed electing Jimmy Carter would be "a disaster. . . . We can't allow Carter to win. . . . Here are ten things [President Gerald Ford has] got to do to prevent Carter from beating him." Tough stuff, from a man who had been the Democratic nominee for president just eight years earlier.

President Ford himself writes in the foreword to this book that "I can't think of anyone who better embodied the old maxim that while we make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give. By that standard, Bill Simon lived an exemplary life."

■ Retired Lt. Gen. William Odom, former director of the National Security Agency, has long been one of America's most astute geopoliticians. In *America's Inadvertent Empire* (Yale, 304 pp., $30), Odom and coauthor Robert Dujarric discuss the special kind of empire that today's American superpower represents: the guardian of a loose system of alliances involving nations that are, on the whole, committed to liberal principles. This alliance system "has slightly less than a quarter of global military manpower [but] an overwhelming two-thirds of the world's military budgets": a military hegemony backing up a quasi-constitutional international political order.

The authors contend that, for a variety of reasons—our military force, population growth, economic strength, scientific leadership, and high-quality universities (don't laugh; they're better than those in other countries)—there is now "an encouraging prospect for a long-lasting empire." But they caution that while America "faces no serious challengers for its leadership position" in the foreseeable future, U.S. leaders may nonetheless take actions that erode or relinquish that position unilaterally. America's key tasks in coming decades are to strengthen our liberal institutions; continue to improve our military; make liberalization, not democratization per se, central to our foreign policy; and encourage our allies—especially those that are "mature constitutional states"—to recognize that they are "full stakeholders" in our common project. "Unlike in traditional empires," Odom and Dujarric write, "the member-states in this new Liberal empire have a strong stake in its durability. The United States cannot be indifferent to their welfare without endangering its own." **NR**

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■ CITY DESK ■

Voice of the People

RICHARD BROOKHISER

"You can't fight City Hall" is an old piece of folk wisdom on the obduracy of rulers and the impotence of the ruled. Check and balance our rulers as we might, they will do what they please with whatever power we allow them. Thus the peasant, cunning and illiterate, who lurks inside us all. Yet we also assume, as newspaper readers and children of the Enlightenment, that we can nudge our rulers. We bring them in and throw them out; we can bring problems to their attention. Obeying my proud confident self, I recently went to City Hall to testify before the City Council.

City Hall, finished in 1812, was a happy municipal investment. The builder, John McComb, made it both palatial and light, covered with pastry-like touches, yet not so many as to produce indigestion. A steep, wide flight of steps leads to the door; inside, a graceful double staircase curls up the rotunda. The City Council chambers, on the second floor, are darker and odder, but the details engage the eye: mahogany columns sprouting leafy capitals; a statue of Jefferson and paintings of Washington and Lafayette (not the boy hero, but a broad-shouldered old man in long pants); the city coat of arms, with its quaint iconography—a settler, an Indian, a pair of beavers—and the proud date, 1625.

I came to testify before one of the Council's committees in favor of a resolution ("reso" in Council jargon) urging the state legislature to permit the medical use of marijuana under certain conditions. I qualify as an expert, having puked my way through chemotherapy in 1992. I trot it out like John Kerry's war service. But leave the issue for the pundits and the wonks; just now I am interested in the manners of government.

New York City government combines the features of a country and a small town. Besides its long history, it can boast of its large scale. With a population of 8 million, New York City is bigger than 39 states and many nations. Each of the 51 City Council members represents 157,000 people. That's less than one quarter of a congressman's constituents, but half again as many as a British MP's. At heart, though, the City Council is a microscope through which government examines the neighborhood and the little platoon. When a woman from the Bronx testified tearfully about her brother's pot use during a long, fatal illness, her councilwoman greeted her by name; the councilwoman who chaired the meeting offered encouraging words, just like any friend of a friend.

A morning session offers a bouquet of accents. Some of these are ethnic. There is the lilt of the Caribbean, which has been sending its children here since Alexander Hamilton. There is the nasal twang of the white people whom I had assumed had left for Jersey long ago. Some accents belong to professional types. There is the drone of the institutional representative, reading from a position paper, like the disc jockey of an easy-listening radio station when the volume is too high. There is the gamecock combativeness of the expert, instructing mere lawmakers in the truth.

Lawmakers themselves come in different types. Seniority and personality give some an enviable ease. One councilman graciously blew the whistle on himself by saying that the chairman had reminded him that his question was not in fact a question. She demurred, saying she had not reminded him of anything. "I felt your presence," he explained. Others are quiet and careful; their questions are always questions, and they press with gentle determination for answers. Others start at hares, and boisterously give chase. These types appear in the school board and the College of Cardinals; they probably appeared in the Politburo, along with other types.

What about us, the witnesses? Experts come with artfully chosen facts and figures, but more important they come with expertise. For every card they show, they have up their sleeves a deck that they might show if they would. Therefore they can offer judgments. Their authority, ostensibly scientific, is in fact priestly. Then there are the purveyors of human interest (my category). They have only one fact, which is their own experience, but they offer it as the ace of trumps. "I was the man, I suffered, I was there." The shaman eats a mushroom, swallows his tongue, and goes to the spirit world; the reporter has an iron constitution and a BS detector and goes to the souk. They all come back with irrefutable testimony. Swirling around every session of every body of lawmakers are representatives of pressure groups. Few are so charming as a man who testified after me. I had defined myself as a conservative Republican, to profit by the apparent incongruity, and also, in New York, to make a joke of my rareness. Another witness, riffing off my shtik, identified himself as a liberal Democrat. The third man, who collected all the chips, said, "I am not a Republican or a Democrat. I am a lobbyist." The organization that sent him, which deals with all things marijuanal, is rather low-key. If anyone had invested big bucks in either synthetic pot, or potential pot farms, you would have seen many more lobbyists about. No witnesses are randomly chosen. Contending parties recruit experts; lobbyists have their own fish to fry; sufferers appear because they have connections of one sort or another. Maybe Adam's family met together under a tree, but the minute there were two families, politics and management reared their heads.

So did Jefferson, Washington, and Lafayette do the right thing? How well does this collection of types, which they bequeathed us, work? The only alternatives are traditional societies, in which favors come via the duke's mistress's waiting maid; or spiritual societies, which are bound together by charisma, or by ideas of racial, religious, or class purity. When spiritual societies are fresh, they tend to kill millions; when they age, they collapse into traditional societies. I'll stick with City Hall. **NR**

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on the right

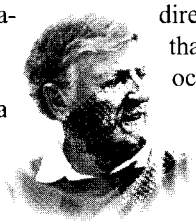
WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Good Day for Democracy

GSTAAD, FEBRUARY 20

THE struggle over the constituting assembly in Iraq reminds us how entrenched democratic fetishism is. Two hundred twenty-five years ago, the Founding Fathers argued over the protocols of the new America, and embarked on eight years of Articles of Confederation, which sought to contain the Federalists' appetite for giving greater power to the central assembly. Then we got the Constitution. Then we got a civil war. And, in between, a dozen constitutional amendments.

The Iraqis are debating over what should happen before June 30, as if it were Patrick Henry arguing with James Madison. The Americans had had almost 200 years of experimentation with self-government, the Iraqis, none. Democracy is, for them as for so many others, a "right" and also a talisman.



An American Sinologist, sent to Vietnam in 1970 to verify the legitimacy of the elections, wrote in a learned journal that for most Indochinese, the idea of entering a polling booth and emerging from it having fashioned the life in which they would proceed to live was sheer thaumaturgy; for some of them, the professor wrote, a laughing matter, on the order of rubbing your left elbow with your right hand while tapping your left foot, expecting that a beneficent god would reward you with a fuller harvest.

The Iraqis should be counseled to treat democracy not as magic, but as a rudimentary approach to self-rule. We can point to the recent democratic experience in the U.S. We all stared at Howard Dean with wonder, amusement, awe, and, finally, apprehension. On February 19 Gerald McEntee, the president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, said that Howard Dean was simply—"nuts."

But how could Dean be "nuts" if Vice President Gore recommended him as the Democratic candidate? And Senator Harkin, in the critical Iowa race?

Meditating on the question, some Americans perhaps thought that Dr. Dean's war cry after the Iowa vote suggested derangement of some kind. He was, after all, the candidate who wondered out loud whether President Bush had known ahead of time of the impending attacks on September 11. Sober analysis of Dean's economic programs, universal health care, a virtual end to free trade, heavy taxation—all of that began turning some people into skeptics. Still, he was the man toward the elevation of whom 3,500 young Americans traveled to Iowa from every corner of the U.S. He was the favorite in virtually every poll taken over a period of three months.

What then happened was a slide in Democratic public opinion from exhilarated, enthusiastic endorsement, in the direction of Mr. McEntee's judgment that Dr. Dean was, well, nuts. Democratic revaluation began to set in, and Dean moved from overwhelming favorite to bedraggled third place.

That kind of corrective renewal bolsters faith in the tactical achievements of democratic practice. How can these be understood in Iraq, let alone appreciated and absorbed? The 20th-century lunacy of one-man, one-vote is a heavier potion of democratic elixir than the Iraqis can swallow. But can they be brought to understand *that*?

Crooked Thought

GSTAAD, FEBRUARY 24

THE debasement of people who reach out for political recognition is the most solemn rebuke to democracy. In the protests against Ralph Nader's decision to run for president, the vector of the complaints is the damage he could effect on the Democratic contender. But at least Nader is able to reply that by his emphasis on saving the spotted owl, or whatever, he maximizes pressure on the Democrats to coopt his programs. But what is to be thought of the debasement not only of politics, but of religion, by John Kerry?

His pursuit of the pro-choice voter is so assiduous as to bring into question his intellectual sanity. Kerry is a Catholic who, he says, opposes abortion but is in favor of the rights of dissenters from his position to have abortions and to advocate a higher incidence of them. That position by Catholic politicians ("I am personally opposed to it, but others aren't, and I respect their rights to their positions") is hardly novel. Ted Kennedy and Mario Cuomo are expositors of the obligation to transcend private opinions in the service of public consensus.

But Kerry has gone what in better days would have been universally held to be one bridge too far. In a speech to a NARAL dinner, he gave an intellectually suicidal summary of his views.

He began by saying that "there is no overturning of *Roe* v. *Wade*." He went on: "There is no outlawing of a procedure necessary to save a woman's life or health." That statement begs the question on which Congress and the state legislatures and the Supreme Court have been stalled for years, namely, Is the invocation of "health," if made by the woman alone, conclusive in authorizing abortion? If so, *Roe* v. *Wade*, which did not authorize willful third-trimester abortions, stands to be revised as the *Roe-Wade-Kerry* decision. Kerry continued: "There [shall be] no more cutbacks on population control efforts around the world." This endorses abortion Chinese-style. Too many people? Too few abortions.

But the eye-popper was still to come: "We need to honestly and confidently and candidly take this issue out to the country and we need to speak up and be proud of what we stand for." But Kerry says he personally opposes abortion. Where is he exhibiting his pride in what he stands for? Whom has he counseled against abortion? A nun somewhere, out of earshot?

The popular notion is jejune, holding that opposition to abortion is the position—the sectarian position—of the Catholic Church. *Catholics oppose abortion*, the reasoning goes. Therefore, *anti-abortion is a Catholic position.*

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Jews oppose genocide, therefore opposition to genocide is a Jewish position.

It is true that the Catholic Church is the most visible opponent of abortion. But its opposition to the practice is not based on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is based on the proposition that human beings are human beings even if they have not yet been born. The one-day-old child is protected with the full force of the law. The proposition that he is without rights when he is minus one day old is nothing more than a social convention conflating various concerns. One is for the mental health of the mother, one for the perceived satisfaction of the mother, another for the national birthrate, and still another for the unspoken hope that we'll have fewer black and Hispanic births.

Apologists for John Kerry's inanimate disapproval of abortion contend with the problem, for instance, "Catholics for Kerry." Its pitch is that his war on abortion is most subtly conceived. You see, most abortions are had by the very poor. "Kerry's vision for America is a pro-life vision that will ultimately reduce the frequency of and need for abortions"—after Mr. Kerry has eliminated poverty. Perhaps the candidate should be asked: Would it be reasonable to prohibit abortion for women who are millionaires?

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has said that "the well-informed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political policy or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals." We need to know from John Kerry: Why do you personally oppose abortion? Not because it is a Catholic position and you are bound to it as a Catholic, because, manifestly, you don't feel bound by Catholic teaching. Tell us, then, what are *your* reasons for opposing abortion? Would you tell us if we promise not to pass the word on before Election Day?

Israel Frenzy

GSTAAD, MARCH 2

It is being claimed that neocon policies are determined by the advantages they bring, manifest or putative, to Israel. Pat Buchanan, in the *American Conservative*, believes this ardently, while the most quoted advocates of neocon militancy, Richard Perle and David Frum, go further than to deny that neoconservatism is an Israel First world view. They insist that criticism of neocon policies is, at heart, anti-Semitic.

Richard Perle, co-author with Frum of *An End to Evil*, was for many years on the public scene as an opponent of Soviet wiles and analyst of the perils of complacent coexistence. Perle's specialty was national defense, and he was there year after year to point out, for instance, that the disarmament fetishists played into the hands of Soviet opportunists. If we unilaterally stopped testing nuclear weapons, we risked Soviet technical advantage. If we stopped deploying theater weapons in Europe, we were threatened by the Soviets' development of their SS-20 missiles and the corresponding advantages in leverage over Western Europe.

It is reasonable to say that Perle's focus on the Communist threat was central to his devising of corollary policies. It is charged now, by e.g. Buchanan, that that focus is now on Israel. That Perle and co-author Frum rise in the morning with a map of Israel in front of them and decide what ideas, people, and countries to encourage, and which to discourage, based on their bearing on Israel.

These acts of analytical reductionism are in part owing to political realities. Buchanan, who has an ear for the trenchant way of saying things, wrote ten years ago that Congress had become the "Amen corner" for pro-Israel policies. In this space, I once jocularly proposed that Israel be annexed as the 51st state, which would give us the advantage of participating in the formulation of Israeli policies which we would then endorse.

Nobody who knows his way around questions the political leverage of the Jewish vote in critical states or denies the importance of Jewish patronage of favored candidates and office holders.

But the transposition of this into the position that U.S. policies are formulated because they bear directly on Israeli interests is invention. The proposal to go to war against Iraq was advocated in one form or another by Perle. But that policy proceeded from the loins of Rumsfeld and Bush after 9/11, and was animated by the U.S. interest in the stability of the Near East. The administration arrived at the conviction that the sepsis of which the 9/11 attack was a single, lethal thrust was a variant of the Islamic fundamentalism that had taken over Afghanistan and almost certainly was festering in Iraq. Which was governed by a totalist dictator who had already used weapons of mass destruction and was accumulating an inventory for strikes against his neighbors and nations of the West.

Israel, by geographical proximity, would have been an obvious target of Saddam's belligerence, but not necessarily the exclusive target of it. Saddam Hussein, in the past, had attacked not Israel but Kuwait, and before that, Iran.

The hostility to Israel on the part of Muslims is a fact of life, but to say that the war against Iraq bolstered Israel's security is not to say that we went to war in Iraq in order to bolster Israel's security.

There was no distinctive pressure, in 2003, to send Marines to Iraq in order to destroy a regime hostile to the Israel. And associates of the administration would probably confess, if out of earshot, that they would not have recommended the war on Iraq except for their conviction that it was becoming a storehouse of weaponry that Saddam was entirely capable of using, whether against Kurds, Kuwaitis, Iranians, or Israelis.

The neocon movement, it is being suggested, is motivated by concern for Israel but, more, by its affinity for the Likud party of General Sharon, which represents militant and, many believe, shortsighted policies, contrasting with policies advocated by many Israelis, including past Israeli leaders, Ehud Barak prominent among them.

It's an unreasonable polarization of opinion: 1) everything a neocon advocates is animated by a concern for Israel, and 2) every criticism of neocon policy is animated by anti-Semitism. That is straitened thought, and should be resisted.

—Universal Press Syndicate

CITY SANITARIUM

"We're downgrading your condition from 'nutcase' to 'wacko.'"

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Who You Gonna Call?

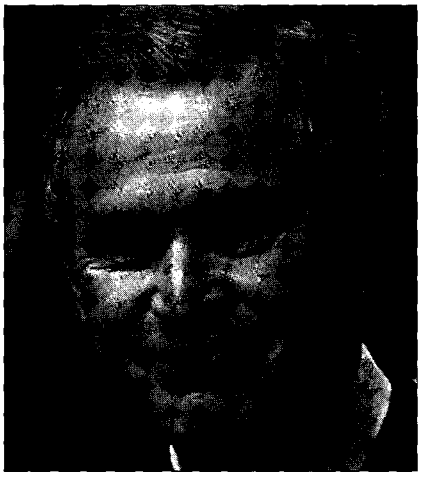
A few months ago, you'll recall, the Pentagon declared the axis of weasels ineligible for Iraqi reconstruction contracts. An affronted Gerhard Schroeder replied that this act was illegal under international law. President Bush took it in his stride. "International law?" he said. "I better call my lawyer. He didn't bring that up to me."

Lovely line. I thought of Bush's response during another fevered weekend in the increasingly surreal atmosphere of post-war Britain. The Crisis of the Day was an allegation by Clare Short—she's the disaffected ex-cabinet minister who revealed that MI6 bugged Kofi Annan's office—that Blair had "leant on" the attorney-general, Lord Goldsmith, to provide an opinion that Britain's going to war with Iraq would be "legal." Lord Goldsmith apparently had "profound doubts" about the legality of the action. All over the news bulletins and op-ed pages, the controversy raged. Baroness Kennedy, Queen's Counsel (that's British for Mark Geragos in a fancy wig), said that, under pressure from Blair, Goldsmith had turned to one of "only two lawyers who would have argued for the legality."

Big deal. I care about this as much as I care about whether some old guy touched Naomi Wolf's thigh in 1977 or 1953 or whenever it was. In both cases, so what? The only difference is that my statute of limitations runs out on Saddam's thigh even faster than on Naomi's. I mean, even if Ms. Short and Lady Kennedy and all the rest are correct, what's the old butcher going to do about it? Sue to get his country back? Plus punitive damages?

Last year, I had a conversation with the late Gareth Williams, then Leader of the House of Lords and one of the most affable of Blairite cabinet ministers. I was moaning about the way Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, a far more forceful proponent of the case against Saddam than Colin Powell, nevertheless felt obliged to keep emphasizing that Britain was not committed to regime change in Iraq. "What's the deal with all this no-regime-change stuff?" I asked. "Well," said Lord Williams, a former attorney-general himself, "if we were to say we were going to war to change the regime, it would be illegal." I rolled my eyes, and he chuckled. "Don't laugh," he said. "Tony takes that sort of thing very seriously."

That's the difference. Unlike Bush, when Blair says "International law? I better call my lawyer," he's not joking.



JOYCE NALTCHAYAN/AFP

'International law? I better call my lawyer.'

But neither, on occasion, is Washington. U.S. intelligence is mired in legalism, which is one reason it was MI6 and not the CIA that did so much of the dirty work at the U.N. On the first night of the Afghan campaign, an unmanned CIA drone identified Mullah Omar's SUV fleeing Kabul and, lacking the authority to push the button, relayed the news back to Florida. Tommy Franks is said to have replied, "My JAG doesn't like this, so we're not going to fire." A JAG is a judge advocate general, as you'll know if you watch the eponymous show on CBS. It speaks volumes for our times that the only military adventure series on network TV is about a Navy lawyer. So, instead of having been killed on the first night as a cautionary tale about the perils of playing host to those who slaughter U.S. civilians, the one-eyed mullah is still out there somewhere, in some cave.

Chewing things over with Lord Williams, I borrowed from the NRA: If you outlaw imperialist aggression, only outlaws will imperialistically aggress. When Saddam wants to gas Kurds, he doesn't need to seek an opinion from his attorney-general on the legality thereof. Article One, Section One, of Saddam's constitution pretty much covered every eventuality: "The President-for-Life shall have the right to do whatever the hell he wants. Yeah, baby!"

For 80 years the more-or-less sane powers have looked to international legalism to contain outlaws. In the League of Nations era, the fellows who didn't bother consulting their JAGs were themselves great powers—Germany, Japan, and so forth. During the Cold War, the outlaws were at least great-power proxies—the various Soviet clients destabilizing Africa and Asia. But these days the outlaws represent nobody but themselves, and the result of the "legalistic" regime of global relations is that it confers a technically inviolable sovereignty on every tin-pot thug on the planet. You see it at Turtle Bay any day of the week, but here's a choice example: Last August, after the bloody terrorist attack on the U.N. in Iraq, the president of the Security Council expressed his condemnation of the incident. The president of the Security Council was at that time the representative of Syria. Syria is a terrorist state. So a fellow who's usually the apologist for terrorists gets to go on TV to represent the international community's determination to stand up to terrorism. International legalism, by obliging us to make no distinction in legitimacy between a Syrian ambassador and a New Zealand one, vastly inflates the status of the former—and thereby diminishes that of the latter.

International law? "I better call my lawyer." Better not to. The civilized world cannot depend on legal niceties to protect it from the horrors of the new century. If the Iraq war turns out to have been "illegal," that's just another bonus. **NR**

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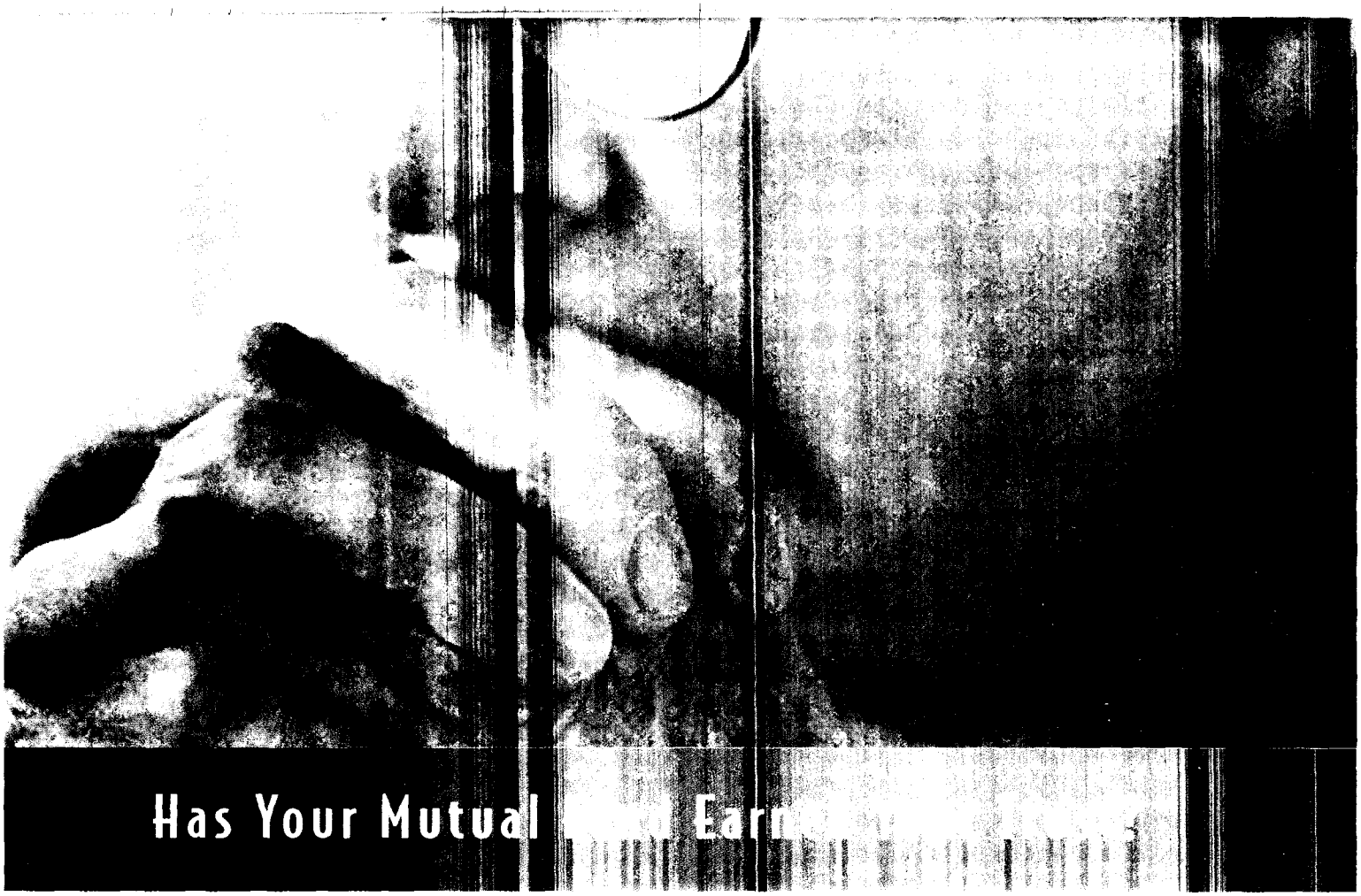

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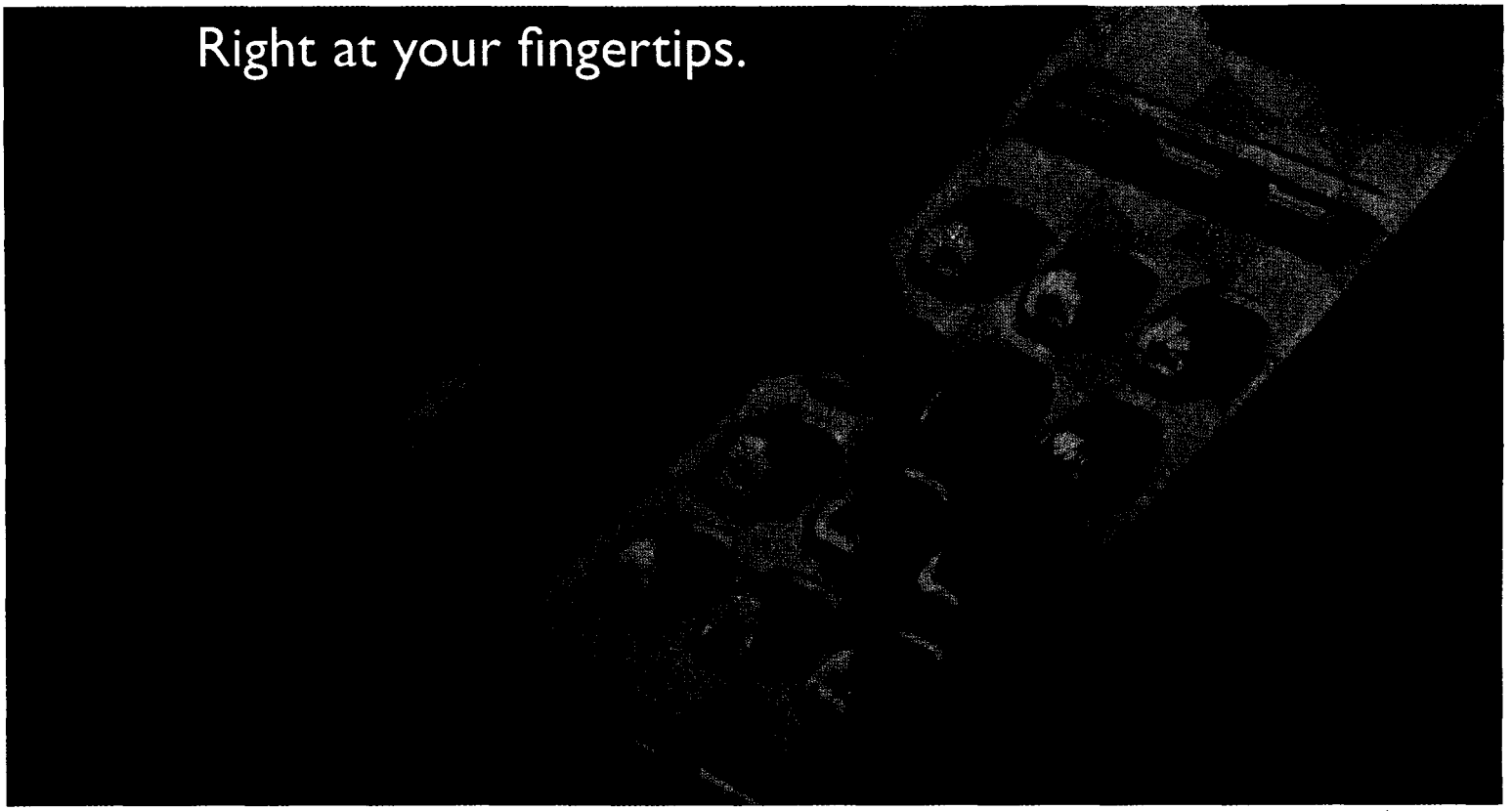

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